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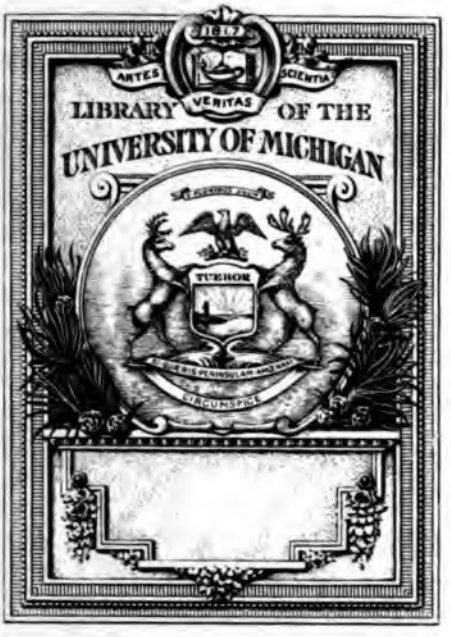
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MEMOIRS OF A SOCIAL ATOM

MEMOIRS OF A SOCIAL ATOM

By
W. E. ADAMS
Author of "Our American Cousins," etc.

VOL. II.

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MEMOIRS OF A SOCIAL ATOM

CHAPTER XXXII

LONDON IN THE FIFTIES

AS nobody seemed to want my services in the provinces, I set out for London. There I had friends, introductions, the promise of work. It was not my first visit to the great city. Four years before—to use a form of words which passed for wit in Gloucestershire—I had "shown London a fool." It was the year of the Great Exhibition. The memory of that marvellous creation—surpassed in size, but not eclipsed in grace or interest, by any effort that has succeeded it—remains as a dream of fairyland. Nothing I have ever seen has impressed me as it did. If I did not see all the wonders it contained, it was not so much my fault as my misfortune; for I spent the greater part of three days within its crystal walls—one day from ten in the morning till six at night. The Exhibition

of 1851 was the first of its kind, and the most enchanting.

The London of 1855 differed vastly from the London of to-day. It had no Thames Embankment, no underground railways, no street trams, no magnificent avenues, no suburban theatres. Hornsey was a rural village, so was Streatham, so were dozens of other pretty places now absorbed in what Cobbett called the Great Wen. Kennington Park was a common; Smithfield Market was held in the City; and the Percy lion with its poker tail came down from Northumberland House every day it heard the clock strike twelve! The first-class playhouses could almost be counted on a single hand, and music halls were few and far between. I can remember only four halls of any note—the Canterbury, the Oxford, the Holborn, and the Eagle. The Brill, the New Cut, and Petticoat Lane were favourite places for Sunday morning marketings. The Polytechnic was in its prime; the Coliseum was still patronised; and Vauxhall and Cremorne Gardens were bringing together nightly strange mixtures of the decent and the dissolute. J. M. Bellew, Thomas Binney, and Robert Montgomery were notable among preachers, while a young man of the name of Spurgeon was beginning to draw audience and attention.

Gye and Mapleson were rival caterers at Her Majesty's and Covent Garden. Grisi and Mario, Alboni and Lablache, were still stars, albeit falling stars, of the operatic stage. The three former appeared together in "Lucretia Borgia," during a series of popular representations at Drury Lane, when the house was full of fog as well as people, and we on the Olympian heights could only see the performers flitting like shadows across the stage. English opera, with the help of Balfe and Wallace, and of Pyne and Harrison, was holding up its head too: the song of the Muleteer, as I heard Harrison render it, was, I thought, as fine as the song of the Toreador in "Carmen." Webster reigned and played at the Adelphi, Buckstone at the Haymarket, Phelps at Sadler's Wells, Charles Kean at the Princess's. It was in 1851 that I saw Phelps in "Timon of Athens," but it was not till years later that I saw what I thought was the greatest performance to be seen on any stage—Phelps's rendering of Sir Pertinax MacSycophant. Charles Mathews retained his place for years as the prince of light comedy. Wright and Paul Bedford were leading low comedians, so were Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, while people were beginning to talk about a clever little fellow at the Grecian—Frederick Robson, who, ascending to the major stage, made

the burlesque of "Medea" as fearsome as a tragedy. And then a few years later there came a sort of race for the first prize in the dramatic world between Henry Neville and Henry Irving.

Temple Bar was a picturesque obstruction; the Adelphi Arches gave shelter to homeless hundreds; and the River Thames was an open sewer. Long stretches of filthy slime, the playground of mud-larks, were exposed at every falling tide, and gave off such evil odours in hot weather that people had to hold their noses when they crossed the bridges. There was a threat of pestilence as a consequence. And then the authorities, seeing that something must be done, conceived a great sewerage scheme, and replaced the foul shores with that pride and glory of London—the Thames Embankment. Other improvements—the construction of Holborn Viaduct, the widening of many thoroughfares, but, above all, the sweeping away of pestilential rookeries, such as the Seven Dials—have made the metropolis a far sweeter and handsomer city in the twentieth century than it was in the middle of the nineteenth.

The order observed in the streets, the unwritten law of the people, was even then remarkable. I may give an example. The *Morning Star* was at that time the leading Radical daily in London—almost the only Radical daily, indeed. It was my

custom every morning (Sundays excepted, of course) to buy a copy at a news stall near the Horns Tavern at Kennington. My business was in Fleet Street. The route thither from the Horns was along Kennington Road, through Newington Butts, past the Elephant and Castle, along London Road, then along Blackfriars Road, and then over Blackfriars Bridge. So orderly was the traffic throughout that route that I could, by keeping to the right, read my paper the whole way. And I had nothing left to read in it—at least, nothing that I wanted to read—when I reached Fleet Street, nearly an hour's walk from Kennington. The feat—if it was a feat—was only possible when people kept in line. All I found it necessary to do, where the traffic was thickest, was to walk immediately behind somebody else. Pedestrians at that period who did not observe the rule of the pavement had as bad a time of it as a dog in a fair. Indeed, they were so buffeted about that they very soon discovered that it was really compulsory to "keep to the right."

A well-known rendezvous for Reformers in the middle years of the century was the John Street Institution, situated near Tottenham Court Road. It had been a chapel, I think, but was then leased by the followers of Robert Owen. Lectures were

given there; meetings were held there; classes were conducted there. A more useful centre of social and political activity did not exist in all London. The platform was perfectly free. Chartism, Republicanism, Freethought, Socialism—all sorts and conditions of thought could be expounded in John Street if capable exponents desired to expound them. I had heard Mrs. C. H. Dexter lecture there in 1851 on the Bloomer costume, and in the Bloomer costume. There also, five years later, I heard the venerable Robert Owen, then a patriarch of eighty-four. The subjects discussed were of the widest and most varied character—social, political, religious, literary, scientific, economical, historical. And the lecturers who discussed them were as varied as the subjects—Thomas Cooper, Robert Cooper, Samuel Kydd, Dr. Mill, Dr. Sexton, Iconoclast, Henry Tyrrell, Richard Hart, Joseph Barker, Brewin Grant, George Jacob Holyoake, and many another whose very name is now forgotten. Of all the able men who endeavoured to enlighten the public from the John Street platform not one survives save George Jacob Holyoake. When the lease of the institution expired, a source of real light and ventilation expired also.

There were other institutions which Reformers used to frequent when they saw a chance of ex-

pounding their ideas. These were the debating rooms that were attached to certain taverns. The leading three in my day were the Cogers, near St. Bride's Church; the Discussion Hall, in Shoe Lane; and the Temple Forum, in Fleet Street. The Cogers was an ancient institution, dating from 1755, but was then fast dying, though it survived in a way till 1886, when its hall and all that belonged to it were put to the hammer. Many who afterwards played a prominent part in the politics of the country, or attained high distinction at the bar or on the bench, had learnt to know the rules of debate and acquired an aptitude for public speaking at Cogers Hall. Curran and Daniel O'Connell were both members, as also were John Wilkes, Orator Hunt, and many of the early English Radicals. Among the legal Cogers who attained eminence were Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, Mr. Baron Maule, Mr. Justice Hannen, Serjeant Parry, Serjeant Ballantine, and Sir Edward Clarke. Dickens, too, belonged to the ancient and honourable Society of Cogers; and George Augustus Sala has told how he made, or rather tried to make, his first speech to the Grand Coger in the chair. The Temple Forum, I think, had no history. It was held in a back room of the Green Dragon, small and ill-ventilated. The only time I visited the place, the debaters, whom

I could scarcely see for smoke, were discussing a celebrated case of the day—I think that of Constance Kent. But the Discussion Hall had better quarters and a better set of speakers.

The landlord of the tavern in Shoe Lane was named Walters, and the hall in which the meetings were held was a really presentable apartment—long and lofty, comfortably furnished with seats and tables, with a canopied chair for the president, who generally smoked a long pipe, and drank brandy and water. As the rest of the company smoked and drank too, the scene had a free and easy air about it. Oil paintings of some of the celebrities who had shared in the debates decorated the walls of the room, including those of Thomas Hardy, Alderman Waithman, and William Carpenter, all famous Radicals in their day. The subject for discussion, together with the name of the gentleman who was to open it, was announced beforehand in the window of the tavern. It was a point of some importance to get a good opener. And as a fee of five shillings, with free drinks for the evening, was attached to the performance, there was no difficulty in getting clever, broken-down men from Fleet Street to accept the engagement. Poor old Bronterre O'Brien, a tribune of the people in the palmy period of Chartism, but then a social and

almost intellectual wreck, was often in demand for this purpose. The permanent chairman for some years was Andrew Middlemass, who was supposed to be a journalist, who had formerly been an accountant in Newcastle, and whose death was recorded in 1889. After each speech, the chairman used to make an important announcement—"The waiter's in the room ; give your orders, gentlemen." Many admirable speeches were delivered in Discussion Hall, although, as the night wore on, the applause, which was accompanied by the jingling of glasses, became rather boisterous. The speakers *could* speak too. One talked so well about finance and taxation that he went by the name of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Others were great on questions of foreign policy ; others, again, on legal and social subjects. They were not all beery people either, for among the frequenters was Mr. Fleming, then a member of the staff of the *Morning Advertiser*, but better known for his connection with Robert Owen's movement, having been, like Lloyd Jones and George Jacob Holyoake, a social missionary appointed by the great philanthropist to expound his theories and doctrines to the people. The discussions which took place in my hearing rose far above the curious surroundings—so much so that I brought away from Discussion Hall a much more

favourable opinion of the intelligence than of the habits of the debaters.

The last visit I paid to the place was late at night. It was in the company of Austin Holyoake, younger brother of George Jacob, and of John Watts, elder brother of Charles Watts. We had been engaged in producing Mr. Bradlaugh's paper, the *National Reformer*. When we had completed our work, it was proposed that we should go and see how the debaters finished up their proceedings. Discussion by that time had degenerated into a noisy and general hubbub, in which everybody seemed to be talking at once. All manner of strange characters, most of them more or less muzzy and muddled, were holding forth to each other. Political orators, writers for the *Standard*, sub-editors of the *Family Herald* and the *London Journal*, contributors to other popular periodicals, waiters on Providence, hirelings of the press and of the platform, were among the men of light and leading who were enjoying a midnight revel in Shoe Lane. Instead of reeling home when the tavern closed its doors, most of them adjourned to a "night house" in Farringdon Street, where, being joined by other sweepings from the streets and the newspaper offices, they continued their noisy drinkings and disputations till far into the morning. One of the new revellers

was notable at the time for his appearance on Chartist and Radical platforms. John Henriette was a sort of Silas Wegg, a democratic orator with a wooden leg. I was amazed, though the rest of the company seemed rather amused than amazed, when he openly boasted of having been employed by Lord Palmerston to assist in creating political diversions at electoral contests in the provinces. It was the only time I ever had an opportunity of seeing how the lesser literary men of the day comported themselves at the close of the week's work, and I neither desired nor sought another. The spectacle, so far from being impressive or elevating, was calculated to take the heart out of a young and ardent propagandist.

CHAPTER XXXIII

A PROPAGANDA OF IDEAS

WE did not forget our obligations—we poor propagandists. Bear in mind that we were Republicans, not Revolutionists. It was no part of our business to disturb, or attempt to disturb, the established order of things. We wanted to make Republicans, not a Republic. When we had done that, we felt and knew that the change would come as naturally and with as little disturbance as the fruit succeeds the flower. The explanation, though it may not save the propaganda from ridicule, may at least help to save it from opprobrium. Another thing—we were not the friends of every country but our own. We were friends of the peoples, it is true, but we were friends of our own people first of all. Patriots and propagandists, we had, we thought, an even higher idea of national honour than some of those who ruled the destinies of England. Anyway, whether Monarchy or Republic, England was our home, our country,

our beloved mother. It was her heroes we revered; it was her people we wished to elevate; it was her renown we longed to increase. The design was perhaps sufficiently dignified to redeem the small efforts we made from contempt or derision. There was already a Republican association in London when two of us, after the break-up of the Brantwood experiment, found ourselves in the great city. The brethren received us warmly. Nor was it long before we had commenced such active operations as the nature of the movement sanctioned. The very first distinct step we took was, I think, the distribution of tracts among the crowds that assembled in Hyde Park to celebrate the conclusion of peace after the Crimean War. That insignificant effort was followed by the preparation of special leaflets that were scattered about with great care and discrimination. It was intimated at the foot of the leaflets that copies of others could be had gratis at four addresses in different parts of London; but I do not recollect that a single application was ever received in consequence. As, however, we were all young then, and had been told by Mazzini to "revere the enthusiasm of youth," the disappointment did not disconcert us.

Our numbers never at any time, I think, exceeded twenty. Yet we regularly held our family meetings

—sometimes in Holborn, sometimes in Bethnal Green, sometimes in the City Road, at other times in the neighbourhood of the Regent's Park. There we discussed schemes for the regeneration of mankind, subscribed our pence for propagandist efforts, and solemnly devised means and measures for converting the rest of the world to our views! The minute book of the association, which is still preserved, clearly indicates that something much higher than material welfare entered into the ideas and the aims of the members. There was nothing selfish or sordid in our methods or objects. It was not to benefit ourselves, to increase our own leisure, advance our own interests, or promote our own enjoyment, that we combined. Rather did we find satisfaction in sacrifice—the sacrifice of time, energy, and such poor resources as we possessed. The members of our little society were so restricted in this world's goods that the audit of the first year's accounts showed an income from subscriptions of one pound six shillings and fourpence halfpenny, an expenditure of one pound six shillings, and a balance of fourpence halfpenny! Nevertheless, impoverished as we were, we managed every now and then to contribute to the funds of the Continental Revolutionists of that day, thus helping to the utmost of our means in the liberation of oppressed nationali-

ties. Besides these small endeavours, we occasionally commissioned one or more of our members to attend meetings in the Caledonia Fields and elsewhere to advocate our doctrines or defend from aspersion the leaders of patriotic and revolutionary movements abroad.

A pathetic interest attaches to some entries in the minutes relating to one of these leaders. Stanislas Worcell, a venerable Polish nobleman, known to us all and beloved by us all, was then living in an obscure corner of London—a grave and dignified victim of Russian tyranny. The minutes referring to Worcell begin in December, 1856, with a request to the members for information as to the price of a copy of a certain edition of Hutton's "Course of Mathematics." The society resolved to purchase and make him a present of the book, the members subscribing five shillings and sixpence for that purpose. A month later it was reported that efforts to obtain the book had failed, when the secretary was instructed to write to Mr. Worcell asking him whether any other edition would suit his requirements. Then came the meeting for February, 1857. "The secretary," so runs the report, "said that he had written to Mr. Worcell respecting the book which he required, but was sorry to inform the brethren that since doing so the brave-hearted old

man had died—another victim to the inflexible tyranny of Russian misrule." And then occurs this entry:—"As the only tribute of respect they could pay to his worth, and to show their abhorrence of the system which had made him an exile and a martyr, it was agreed that as many of the brethren as possible should follow his remains to Highgate Cemetery."

The funeral of Worcell was a remarkable event. It was attended by natives of almost all the countries of Europe—Poles, Hungarians, Italians, Russians, Frenchmen, nearly every man of them an exile, and nearly every man of them with a price upon his head. There was, first and foremost, Joseph Mazzini, for whom the Austrians, after a rising in Milan, had searched the very coffins as they were being carried to the graveyard—slight of stature, sorrowful of countenance, intellect and power in every flash of his eye, in every line of his face, in every hair of his beard. Then there was Alexander Herzen, who, flying from Russia, had managed to save his property from confiscation—the only man among the exiles who was not almost penniless. And then there was Ledru Rollin, a leading member of the Provisional Government of February, who had fled from France in consequence of a violent protest in which he had shared

on behalf of Poland. The procession from Hunter Street to Highgate was preceded by a band of music playing the "Dead March." Speeches, of course, as happened on all such occasions, were made over the grave—in English, in French, in Polish. The speech in English was delivered by Peter Alfred Taylor, the friend of suffering peoples, afterwards and for many years member of Parliament for Leicester. Ledru Rollin, who had great fame as an orator in France, looked the character (being handsome, tall, and portly) as he poured forth a flood of mellifluous language in denunciation of a despotism that had driven such men as Worcell to perish in a foreign land. The Poles who spoke registered a vow of undying hatred of the Russian Government. The company which thus bore testimony to deep affection for the exile was small; but most of the men composing it had been, and continued to be till they died, a terror to the despots of the Continent.

Another political funeral occurred a year or two later. It was that of Simon Bernard. The mourners on this occasion were much more numerous than those who had followed the remains of Worcell. One reason was that Dr. Bernard had not long before been charged with complicity in the attempt of Orsini against Louis Napoleon. The acquittal

which followed the trial was regarded as a popular triumph. The death of the accused so soon after the verdict of the jury had set him at liberty naturally attracted a good deal of attention. Hence the large crowd which, also accompanied by a band of music playing solemn airs, marched in procession to the Kensal Green Cemetery. But, though the crowd was larger, it did not seem to me to be composed of the same elements or distinguished for the same dignity as that which had assembled at Highgate. Perhaps the explanation was to be found in the character of the two exiles. While Worcell was a man of saintly life and aspirations, Bernard was a bit of a madman—moreover, a furious Socialist, which at that time was much the same thing. I shall give an example of his mad humour presently. The main body of the mourners seemed to be made up of that type of revolutionist that is never happy except in revolt—the type that would destroy for the mere sake of destruction—the type that in later years produced a Ravachol and a Vaillant. But I remember three notable men among them. One was Felix Pyat, who was subsequently associated with the lurid affairs of the Paris Commune. Another was the Russian exile Bakunin, a man of gigantic stature, who had lately performed the unparalleled feat of escaping from Siberia down

the Amoor, and who afterwards became the chief of the Nihilists. The third was Thomas Allsop, the friend of Lamb and Coleridge and Hazlitt, who also had been suspected of participation in revolutionary plots. It was Allsop who told me, as we walked in the procession to Kensal Green, how Bernard had ventilated the theory that reverence for sacerdotalism would never be uprooted till a Pope in full canonicals was slain at the very altar! Orations were delivered over the grave, but I have forgotten all about the people who delivered them.

Hyde Park, the scene of the Peace Commemorations in 1856, was the scene a few months later of much more exciting occurrences. We young men of the Republican Association were interested spectators of the occurrences—nothing more. It was a paltry question to us—the question of the observance of the Sabbath. As to beer, with which the question was then mixed up, we knew it to be the ruin of political effort. Still we had interest in all popular excitements. The rumpus arose from an attempt of Lord Robert Grosvenor to close the public-houses on Sundays. A bill for the purpose had been introduced into Parliament. Then the mischief began—rowdy on the part of the mob, violent on the part of the police. Strange means were adopted to excite the passions of the

populace. I remember seeing outside the premises of *Reynolds's Newspaper*, then a purely demagogic organ, a large placard bearing these coarse lines :

> D—— their eyes
> If ever they tries
> To rob a poor man of his beer!

Other imprecations of like character had been preceded by invitations to the mob to "go and see how the aristocracy kept the Sabbath in Hyde Park." Fashionable people were in the habit of enjoying Sunday rides or drives in Rotten Row. The first Sunday after the incitement crowds lined both sides of the roadway, hooting and jeering the horsemen and carriage folk. It was the prelude to disgraceful riots. Next Sunday the ladies and gentlemen who ventured into the Row had to run the gauntlet of showers of turf and stones. The angry mob had become brutal, as all angry mobs are apt to. Another Sunday came round. I went to see what was going to happen. Very few riders presented themselves; but those who did were so pelted with stones that they had to gallop for their lives. The scene was shameful. Now came the turn of the police. Orders were given to clear the park. But the park was thronged by people who had no hand in the riots. The majority of those I saw seemed to be well-dressed,

well-behaved persons, belonging to the working and middle classes. Most of them, like myself, were spectators of the demonstration rather than participators in it. But the police, when charging the multitude in obedience to orders, necessarily came into collision with people who were not offenders at all. Such certainly was the case in that part of the field which came under my notice. I was sauntering among the crowd, when down came a long row of constables, raining blows on the heads of such as could not get out of reach of their *bâtons*. It was necessary no doubt to suppress disorders; but I thought at the time, since I was very nearly a victim myself, that it might have been done with much less violence than was used. The mob, driven out of the park, took its revenge on the houses in Mayfair. Lord Robert Grosvenor thought it prudent to retire into the country; his proposed legislation was abandoned; and the Sunday riots in Hyde Park became a matter of history.

Our little band of propagandists kept the flag flying till the end of the fifties. Then, as the more active among them left London for the provinces, the Colonies, or the United States, the movement quietly died out. There were republican agitations afterwards; but we had little or no sympathy with them, because they were based on no principle and

informed by no elevated ideas. What would be the value of a revolution which had for its root the accidental unpopularity of a prince of the blood? What, again, was the worth of that paltry cry about the Cost of the Crown, raised by Sir Charles Dilke before his own tremendous lapse? It was not because a prince was temporarily unpopular, nor because the Monarchy was supposed to be expensive, that the young men of the fifties gave themselves to a republican propaganda. It was because, high above all accidents, high above all sordid interests, there shone and flamed before them the ideal of an exalted and duteous people.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE "ILLUSTRATED TIMES"

THE Crimean War afforded a splendid opportunity for journalistic enterprise. Few newspapers, however, on account of the Taxes on Knowledge, were able to take much advantage of it. The *Times*, of course, did wonders with the letters of the first war correspondent, William Howard Russell. Rather late in the day Henry Vizetelly, who had had a hand in initiating the *Illustrated London News*, projected a cheaper rival, the *Illustrated Times*, with a special artist at the front, Julian Portch, who unfortunately died at his post. This new paper was an immediate success; for the Crimean War was followed by exciting criminal trials—for example, the trial of William Palmer for the Rugeley poisonings, and that of Madeleine Smith for the murder of her sweetheart in Glasgow. Mr. Vizetelly, a brother of Frank Vizetelly, who was slain or lost with Hicks Pasha in the disastrous expedition to the Soudan in 1884, was the director

of the paper—though it was understood that David Bogue, the Fleet Street publisher, provided most of the capital. As I recollect him at the time, Vizetelly was an active, excitable, wayward sort of man—whimsical and changeable, too, which led to extravagance in management, and eventually to failure. But he had, as we shall see, the faculty of finding able assistants.

The brothers Vizetelly—Henry being then the sole member of the firm—had a printing and engraving business in Gough Square, next corner to Dr. Johnson's old residence. It was there that the *Illustrated Times* was produced. I was lucky enough to present a letter of introduction, just at the time when Vizetelly was making his preparations for the new venture. My work at an office in Fetter Lane had been precarious. Here I was for a while in clover. I was assigned a frame with a good light. Permanently employed, and earning what the pitmen call "good money," I was happy and contented, and to a certain extent prosperous. The change which came later will furnish materials for a sad and bitter paragraph. My highest ambition then and long afterwards was for a settled situation at "case" on a well-established newspaper. Such a situation enabled the fortunate compositor not only to live comfortably, but to pass his leisure

hours in the pursuits and activities that pleased him. If happiness and comfort be the things to be desired, I, who have tried other avocations, know of no condition of life to be preferred to that of the workman who has constant and regular employment at the trade that he likes, provided he is fairly paid for the best he is capable of producing. Many printers in London were thus pleasantly circumstanced. But there were others —the waifs and strays of the trade—whose state was miserable enough. These were known as "grass hands." Too dissolute, many of them, to hold a permanent appointment when chance placed a permanent appointment in their way, they lived from hand to mouth—hanging round the offices of the society till a call came from this or that newspaper for temporary help on the day or night (usually the night) preceding publication. I was a "grass hand" myself for a time, and suffered accordingly.

The work on the *Illustrated Times* was at the beginning agreeable and profitable. But the companionship—the general body of compositors—was of a mixed order. Some of my comrades were sots; the conversation of some others was of the vilest character; but the majority were respectable and intelligent men. One was an authority on music,

another had a good knowledge of art, a third was well versed in literature. We could talk at our work, and the talk was often about books and pictures and operas. We even formed a magazine club—purchasing periodicals, reading them in turn, and then distributing them among the members. Thackeray's "Virginians" and Dickens's "Little Dorrit" were, I recollect, among the serials for which we subscribed. But we had our little troubles. There was an irrepressible disposition among us to chaff each other. My Gloucestershire dialect was still so pronounced that I could at first never utter a word aloud without hearing an aggravating echo all along the room. I did not like it, but I had to put up with it. One day, however, I noticed that my chief tormentor—a Scotchman—had also peculiarities of speech. These I imitated as he had imitated mine. The effect was instantaneous. I had turned the tables. No longer the butt of the room, I chaffed the rest as much as the rest chaffed me. The incident conveys a moral. Other young workmen may learn from it that the best way to relieve themselves of disagreeable attentions is to bestow similar attentions on the men who annoy them. There will then be equality of treatment at all events—which, after all, is the best that need be desired. I have

said that some of my comrades were sots. There were two in particular. One young fellow, when I had chaffingly alluded to his then unhappy condition, informed the whole room that I wasn't man enough to get drunk! Of the other it was said that he had made various attempts to visit the Great Exhibition, but had found so many public-houses on the road that he never got there at all!

The indifference of people to famous things or places in their own neighbourhood has been the subject of comment and surprise from ancient times downwards. It was Pliny, I think, who told of a fountain in Italy that was visited by travellers from far distances which was yet scarcely known to the people who lived near it. The same curious aptitude is observable everywhere, especially in London. Among the compositors in Vizetelly's office was an intelligent man who had passed St. Paul's Cathedral twice a day for many years, and yet had never once had the curiosity or the inclination to look inside the memorable fane. And another member of the companionship, whose work was chiefly with engravings, and who was not without some feeling for art himself, was born and still lived almost within a stone's throw of the National Gallery, but had never taken the trouble to inspect

the treasures on its walls. It is the country cousins who pay flying visits in great shoals to the Metropolis that see most of the sights. But country cousins, as a rule, make short work of the business. I recollect being in the National Gallery when a party of provincial visitors, hot and perspiring, passed me. One of the ladies, while mopping her face with a handkerchief, exclaimed: "There now, we've done this place; let's be off to the Museum." If ever Londoners do visit Westminster Abbey or the Tower, it is in the company of friends from the country.

The *Illustrated Times* was one of the brightest productions of the fifties. All manner of clever young writers, as well as some older writers, were connected with it. Macrae Moir was the editor; James Hannay, author of "Singleton Fontenoy," wrote the leading articles; Edmund Yates began with the "Lounger at the Clubs" that system of personal journalism which has since been widely imitated; William White, a doorkeeper of the House of Commons, described the inner life of Parliament, anticipating the want which is now satisfied by Parliamentary letters in the daily press; Edward Draper contributed an informing weekly paper on Law and Crime; Sutherland Edwards supplied musical criticisms, the Brothers Brough

dramatic criticisms, Noel Humphreys antiquarian notes; Augustus Mayhew did such pictorial work as painting in prose the scenes of the Rugeley poisonings; and George Augustus Sala wrote—when he could be got to write—reviews of books, descriptions of engravings, and in one case a serial novel. All these gentlemen were much about the office.

One night Sala came in a white waistcoat and a red face, looking so comically like a peony set on a tablecloth, that the compositors at the cases had to bury their noses in the space boxes. Vizetelly had more trouble with George Augustus than with any other of his team. When copy was wanted from him, he had to be hunted from one haunt to another. He said himself that he always found a printer's devil alongside his boots in the morning. It happened on one occasion that he was locked in a room at the office with a pot of porter and a packet of cigars till he had finished an article that was required at once. But a more serious difficulty arose later. Sala was writing his story, "The Baddington Peerage." Nothing could induce him to keep up to time with the instalments. At last Vizetelly hit upon an effective device. An announcement was put in type that the editor would no longer apologise for the failure of the

author to supply the continuation of the story, that he was tired of chasing him through all the taverns of Fleet Street and the Strand, and that he was now resolved to let the reader know with whom the responsibility for the lapse really lay. A proof of this announcement was sent to Sala, with an intimation that it would appear in the ensuing issue of the paper unless the copy of the next instalment of the novel was in the hands of the printer by a certain hour. Not only was the copy in hand at the time specified, but I believe there was no further trouble with the eccentric author till the story was finished. It is not a little curious that no fewer than four of the gentlemen associated with the *Illustrated Times*—Vizetelly, Sala, Yates, and Edwards, all dead but Edwards—have published volumes of reminiscences.

The companionship of the *Illustrated Times* had a pretty happy time till Mr. Macrae Moir was succeeded by Mr. Frederick Greenwood. Mr. Greenwood, a brother of James Greenwood, the "Amateur Casual," had been a printer's reader in a well-known book office. I remember him as a spruce young fellow with a rather supercilious air and a black lace necktie. Long afterwards he was credited with suggesting to Mr. Disraeli that the Government should buy the Suez Canal shares; and only lately

he has been described in a book about J. M. Barrie as "the good fairy of Barrie's literary life." A disastrous change in the circumstances of the poor compositors come about when Mr. Greenwood took control of the copy. It may not have been his fault, but we did not know whose else it could be. The change had come with the change of editors. Moreover, had not a heartless reply been returned to a piteous appeal we had made to the new man? It is certain that our lives were made miserable. We had to be at our cases every morning and all day afterwards lest work should come and others be put in our places. But day after day it happened that work did not come till it was just upon time to go home; and then we had to stand at our cases till every scrap of copy was set—always till midnight, often till four or five o'clock in the morning—with the result that next day we had nothing to do again till the editor condescended to send round a great batch of copy in the evening, when of course the same dreary process had to be repeated. The only consolation that the unhappy compositors had as they crawled homewards was in "nailing" (which does not mean blessing) the author or authors of their misery.

It was an awful time for us all. Part of my way had to be traversed alone, and then I must often

have slept as I walked, for I now and then seemed to wake up with a start. To add to our troubles we had to run the risk of being garrotted. London was then in a state of alarm. Almost every morning we read on the newspaper placards—"Another Garrotte Robbery," with sometimes the addition: "Death of the Victim." Policemen, I remember, paced the streets in couples or in parties. Luckily I was never molested, though I had to go home at the loneliest hours of the night and morning—probably because I took the precaution, when by myself, of walking in the middle of the road. The Society of Compositors, I hope, has so reformed the laws and regulations of newspaper work in London that no poor devils have now to endure the horrors that fell to our lot in the fifties.

Mr. Greenwood, I have said, was a printer's reader—printer's reader at the office where Carlyle's books were printed. It was said that he had preserved and bound several volumes of the great man's proofs and manuscripts. Carlyle was a terror to the printers—not so much on account of his handwriting as on account of his fearful tampering with the proofs. Harriet Martineau, in that book of autobiography which my friend Hailing set up at Windermere in 1855, tells an amusing story on the subject. One of Carlyle's works was going through the press in

London. A man from Edinburgh, where his earlier productions had been printed, was given some of his copy. The man dropped it as if it had burnt his fingers. "Lord have mercy!" he cried, "have you got that man to work for? Lord knows when we shall get done with all his corrections!" I was myself for a short time employed in the same office. The "Life of Frederick the Great" was being set up there. I saw some of the proofs. It was the third that lay on the stone. The matter was still in columns, not in pages, for paging was out of the question till the author had exhausted even his almost illimitable power of changing his modes of expression. This third proof was so covered with corrections of all kinds that it would have taken little more trouble and time to reset the whole than to make the alterations. Scarcely a sentence remained unchanged, while flags and circles enclosing new forms and phrases were scattered all over the sheet. I have seen many "dirty proofs," but I never saw anything dirtier than Carlyle's—and that the third too!

CHAPTER XXXV

THE COUP D'ETAT

THE year 1851 was memorable for two things —the Great Exhibition in London and the Coup d'Etat in Paris. The one was a triumph of enlightenment, the other the most appalling crime of the century. The Coup d'Etat, indeed, surpassed in wickedness and horror, in treachery and remorselessness, anything that has ever been recorded, or is ever likely to be recorded, in Western history. The East alone can furnish parallels to the infamy, and even these sink almost into insignificance alongside the supreme and monumental infamy of the Second of December.

The vast majority of the people now living are not old enough to remember the events of 1851. It may be that they have heard of them or read of them. But they have no knowledge from personal experience of the thrill of horror that ran through the country when the news reached it of a diabolical outrage that had placed France at the

mercy of "five base galley slaves." We stood aghast—every one of us, from the highest to the lowest. Every newspaper in the land proclaimed its abhorrence of the iniquity, its loathing of the adventurers who had perpetrated it. What had happened in Paris was such a crime as could not have been conceived possible by the most lurid and diseased imagination. It was, in fact, more than a crime : it was combination of all crimes—perjury, treason, treachery, the subornation of the soldiery, the overthrow of law, the wholesale arrest of all the leading citizens of France, the calm, deliberate slaughter of thousands of innocent people. No civilized city in the whole world was ever the scene of so foul a saturnalia as Paris on that darkest day and night in all the annals of villainy.

The chief criminal was a man whom the French people had chosen as President of the Republic. He was supposed to be a Bonaparte, though there was some doubt as to his actual parentage. He called himself Prince Louis Napoleon, and he claimed to be the inheritor of the Napoleonic legend. Twice he had made theatrical attempts against the French Government—once with a tame eagle at Boulogne, which had been taught to fly to the top of a column, but which failed to carry out its instructions. But the name he bore, or pretended to bear, helped

him with the ignorant peasantry when, after the proclamation of the Republic of 1848, they were required to elect a President. The election to the Presidency was the first step to absolute dominion. But it was necessary that he should take an oath to preserve the Republic. This he did on Dec. 20th, 1848, in the following terms: "Before God and the French people represented by the National Assembly, I swear to be faithful to the Republic, and to fulfil the duties imposed on me by the Constitution." And then, as if to throw the representatives of the people off their guard, he added a declaration of his own. But what is an oath more or less to the felon who means to break them all?

The President lost no time in preparing his plans; but it took him nearly three years to find the suitable instruments for putting them into execution. These instruments were all men of blemished reputations. One had been in trouble in Algiers: he was made Minister of War. Another had been dismissed from a prefecture in the provinces: he was made Prefect of Police. Three or four of the conspirators were, as Kinglake says, known by names that were not bestowed upon them at baptism. It was St. Arnaud who was given the Ministry of War; it was Maupas who was placed in the Prefecture of Police. Among the rest were Morny,

Magnan, and Persigny. Magnan was Governor of Paris. But the chief parts in the villainous drama were played by Maupas, Morny, Persigny, and St. Arnaud, with Louis Napoleon of course at the head of them—Victor Hugo's "five base galley slaves." If the reader desires to know more about the scoundrels, as well as about the atrocious things they did, he is advised to consult the first volume of Kinglake's "History of the Crimean War."

The night came. It was the night preceding Dec. 2nd. What happened was told by Maupas himself in a book of confessions published in 1884. To allay suspicion the President gave a party at the Palace of the Elysée. To further disarm suspicion, Maupas and St. Arnaud left the drawing-rooms of the Elysée by the principal door. A few minutes after ten o'clock the conspirators had all assembled in the Prince's study. "General St. Arnaud and myself," says Maupas, "again enumerated the measures we had prepared. We both reasserted our confidence in the execution of our orders, and then we parted. The Prince shook hands, as he would have done on any ordinary occasion, calm and confident, like all great men who require no effort to raise themselves to the level of the situation." Bear in mind that the level of the situation to which the Prince raised

himself was that of throttling the nation he had sworn to serve. The soldiery had already been corrupted by a feast of sausages and champagne at the camp of Satory. For the officers there was gold. Before the conspirators dispersed, the Prince divided with St. Arnaud the contents of his cash box. "Officers were presently seen breaking rouleaux of gold like sticks of chocolate, and thrusting the pieces into their pockets." At six o'clock in the morning, Morny, or De Morny, took possession of the Home Office with two troops of Lancers. "A quarter of an hour later—and most punctually, for all the agents in this dark night's work had been made to set their watches by that of De Maupas—seventy detachments of detectives and gendarmes, penetrating into seventy different houses, arrested three score and ten of the most popular men in France, and drove them off to prison." Mazas was crowded with victims—statesmen, generals, journalists, members of Parliament, the two quæstors of the National Assembly. Among them, dragged out of their beds in the early hours of a December morning, were M. Thiers, General Changarnier, General Cavaignac, Colonel Charras, General Lamoricière. Not a man of any mark in Paris was left at large. France, held by the throat, was at the mercy of conspirators and ruffians.

The Coup d'Etat was consummated. But the bloodiest part had yet to be done. It was necessary to strike terror into the heart of the people. St. Arnaud and Magnan had filled the Boulevards with troops, "bribed, excited, intoxicated, pitiless." The citizens, curious and wondering, were looking from their windows or strolling along the sidewalks, not understanding what it all meant. Women and children were mingled in the crowd. There was resistance elsewhere. Here there was none. Not a man in the throng bore a weapon of any sort. All at once the order was given to fire. From end to end of the occupied Boulevards the rifles rang out. Men fell, women fell, children fell. Never a soul within sight was spared. It was a battue—with peaceful, unarmed people for game, and a drunken soldiery for sportsmen. The soldiers even entered some of the houses, slaughtering everybody they could find in them. "The troops," said the *Times* of Dec. 12th, "were ordered to select by preference as their victims persons of the class least akin to Socialist insurgents." The gutters of the Boulevards ran with blood; the trees of the Boulevards were watered with blood; a disreputable adventurer was wading through blood to a throne. The Coup d'Etat at the beginning looked too grotesque to be serious. After the

massacre of the Boulevards, it assumed another shape—ghastly, horrible, fiendish. The mountebanks had become demons. The slaughtered, according to a list at the Prefecture of the Seine, numbered two thousand six hundred and fifty-two — all ages, all ranks, both sexes. Then came the proscriptions. Eighty-eight representatives of the people were proscribed; tens of thousands of citizens were imprisoned, transported, interned; the pestilential colonies of Cayenne and Lambessa were choked with patriots who had been sent thither without even the semblance of a trial.

The criminals had overthrown the Republic. They were next to overthrow the Law. Article 68 of the Constitution which the chief criminal had sworn to maintain declared—"Any measure by which the President of the Republic dissolves the National Assembly is a crime of high treason." In the midst of the confusion and bloodshed of Dec. 2nd, two hundred and twenty members of the Assembly signed this decree:—

The National Assembly, extraordinarily assembled at the Mairie of the Tenth Arrondisement,

Considering the 68th Article of the Constitution,

Considering that the Assembly is prevented by violence from discharging its functions,

Decrees:

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte is stripped of his functions of President of the Republic.

Citizens are bound to refuse him obedience.

The Judges of the High Court of Justice are summoned immediately to pronounce judgment on the President and his accomplices.

The High Court of Justice met immediately, and decreed as follows:—

In virtue of the Article 68 of the Constitution, the High Court of Justice declares,

Louis Napoleon Bonaparte committed for the crime of high treason.

The High National Jury is summoned to deliver judgment without delay.

The declaration was signed by Hardouin, President, and Delapalme, Pataille, Moreau, Cauchy, Judges. But the conspirators who had crushed the Republic now crushed the High Court of Justice. There was from that time no law in France but the will of perjurers, traitors, assassins.

Complete as was his triumph over France, the Republic, and the Law, Louis Napoleon, smeared and reeking with gore, was long uneasy on his blood-stained throne. Even the despots of Europe held aloof from a "cutpurse of the Empire"—cutpurse and cutthroat too. He wanted an alliance —matrimonial and political. Austria declined the

one. England, to her shame and sorrow, yielded the other. A weak and vacillating Ministry misled her into the trap. It was Louis Napoleon's business to make war somewhere upon somebody. He chose for quarrel the question of the Holy Places—the paltry question whether the Greek or Latin Churches should control the Sepulchre of the Saviour. England was invited to join him against Russia. The Emperor Nicholas had unfortunately aroused suspicion by proposing that the nations of Europe should prepare to divide the effects of the Sick Man. We drifted into war. It cost us thousands of lives; but it made the Conspirator of December respectable. English people were not averse to the war, because they hoped that the independence of Poland would be revived as one of the consequences. But there was really no intention of doing much harm to Russia—certainly none of liberating Poland. As Kossuth said at the time, the attack on the Crimea was like striking at Russia in the heel of her boot. The war was a dismal failure. Only one thing was gained—the recognition and establishment of the Second Empire.

Other humiliations followed for this country. It had to receive the usurper as an ally. Worse—it had to witness the scandal of his foul lips kissing both cheeks of the Queen of England. When we

read of this last indignity at Cherbourg, there was not an honest woman's face in Britain that did not burn with shame. Four years—four sad and disgraceful years—had sufficed to blind the Press and the Government, and to some extent the people also, to the iniquities of M. Bonaparte. But Victor Hugo would not let us forget them. A translation of the poet's scathing philippic was published by Edward Truelove, then a bookseller at Temple Bar. So subservient, however, had even our authorities become to successful villainy that the police tore down the placard announcing it. Yet at that very moment thousands of French citizens, for no other crime than that of faithfulness to their country, were languishing and perishing in the swamps of Cayenne. Others, more fortunate, had found refuge in the Channel Islands. When, later, these exiles ventured to protest against the contamination involved in the visit of Royalty to the scene of the massacres of December, we had to submit to the ignominy of seeing them expelled without warrant and without trial. It is worth while recalling the shame of that lamentable time if only as a warning against ever again paying homage to triumphant wrong. The events recalled, too, are necessary to explain what were for us the still more exciting incidents of 1858.

CHAPTER XXXVI

"*TYRANNICIDE*"

THE burden of the crimes of the Second Empire did not fall on France alone. Italy also shared that burden. It was, however, before he had waded through blood to a throne that Louis Napoleon had begun the treason against Rome. When the Republic was proclaimed in the Eternal City, he despatched General Oudinot with a fratricidal expedition to Civita Vecchia, solemnly declaring it was not his object to "force upon the State a government contrary to the will of the people." This was in April, 1849. "Three months after," says Mazzini, "Rome, her Government, the will of her people, were inexorably crushed." The heroic defence of Garibaldi failed; the bombarded city surrendered; the Triumvirs, Mazzini the chief, wandered about the streets dazed till friendly advisers found them shelter and safety; Garibaldi himself, after incredible hardships, during which he lost his beloved Anita, escaped to the

FELICE ORSINI.

(*From a photo taken in* 1857.)

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coast and thence into exile. From that time for many years forward the throne of the Holy Father was poised on the points of French bayonets. Hope there was none for Italy as long as France, misled by the man who had mastered her, remained at the head of the coalition of enemies. Every Italian knew this—nobody better than a Roman citizen who had valiantly fought against fearful odds in the defence of his home, Felice Orsini.

The patriotic spirit of Italy, during all the dreadful, dreary years that followed the occupation of Rome, was kept alive by fervent appeals from Mazzini, by schemes which he organized, by revolts and risings which he inspired and in which he shared. But Orsini was impatient of Mazzini's policy. He had taken part in many of the daring adventures and struggles of his time. He had made a marvellous escape from the fortress of Mantua. The story of that escape, told by himself in a little volume, was as widely read in England as the earlier story of Silvio Pellico's imprisonment in the fortress of Spielburg. Coming to this country, he had lectured here and there on the cause of Italy and his own sufferings in connection therewith. Also he had written and published a book of Memoirs. His earnest faith, his intense patriotism, his absorbing passion—all centred in his beloved

Italy—made for him friends and admirers in England. But he longed for some speedier and more certain results than any that had yet followed the efforts of the revolutionary party. Writing in 1855 from his dungeon in Mantua, he declared his distrust of the old methods—conspiracies, outbreaks, insurrections. Again, in his Memoirs, published in 1857, he wrote :—" Italy finds herself at the present moment in the most deplorable condition that can be imagined. This state of things, however, will not last long, because all depends upon Napoleon, and this man will not be tolerated long, with his government based on despotism and treason." It would seem that Orsini was even then contemplating the movement which a year later startled all Europe —a movement which was to employ for the salvation of Italy the very methods which had been employed in 1851, but with infinitely more awful accompaniments, for the subjugation of France.

It came to pass on the night of Jan. 14th, 1858, that Louis Napoleon was returning from the opera. Bombs burst under his carriage, spread terror and destruction all around, but failed to do more than affright the intended victim. The explosions—clumsy, ineffective, fatal to many innocent people—were the work of Orsini and his accomplices. It was thus that he hoped to rid

Italy of the one man who made her redemption impossible. The attempt failed in everything except in arousing the conventional indignation of Europe. Orsini, who had staked his life on the hazard of a desperate venture, resigned himself to his fate. He died, as Mazzini a few months later counselled Louis Napoleon to die, "collected and resigned."

Throughout England there was one long howl of execration. The newspapers forgot the provocation—forgot the bombardment of Rome, the maintenance of the subjugation of Italy—forgot the crime of Dec. 2nd, which had begot the crime of Jan. 14th—forgot their own bitter imprecations of the author of the parent crime.[1] Orsini, from one end of the land to the other, was denounced as a vulgar assassin. Every epithet of abhorrence was heaped upon his name. It seemed to be thought

[1] Shortly after the Coup d'État, Richard Chevenix Trench, then Dean of Westminster, but afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, published a little volume on the "Study of Words." Therein he discussed the word "tyrant," pointing out that a tyrant in the ancient Greek sense meant a usurper, one who had "attained supreme dominion through the violation of the laws and liberties of the State," whereas in the modern sense a tyrant is a ruler who uses his power for base and hateful purposes. And then he added:—"The present ruler of France, in the manner in which he obtained his power and in the manner in which he wields it, throws the fullest light on the meaning of this word." But the passage—the policy of the British Government having in the meantime made the usurper and tyrant respectable—was expunged from subsequent editions of the book.

that there was absolutely no difference between him and the vilest ruffian that had ended his days in Newgate.

But surely there was another side to the picture. Would not somebody take cognisance of the cause of the attempt, of the motive that impelled it, of those not very distant events which had generated in an otherwise high-souled man a fierce and implacable passion? The question presented itself to some of us. It presented itself to me. I prepared a paper which was in some measure a protest against the universal chorus of condemnation, and at the same time an attempt to explain some of the ethical points involved in the catastrophe. The production was juvenile enough; but it did at any rate show that the event which had so excited and enraged the Press had really another aspect than that alone which the exponents of public opinion were content to recognise.

The manuscript was offered in the first place to George Jacob Holyoake, then a publisher in Fleet Street. Mr. Holyoake declined the offer, for one reason, I understood him to say, because he was already in treaty with Mazzini for a pamphlet on that very subject. "Very well," I said, "if Mazzini or anybody else will raise a voice against the pitiful clamour of the day, especially the beatification of

EDWARD TRUELOVE.

(From photo by Robt. Barrass, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1894.)

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Orsini's intended victim, I will pitch my own little screeching behind the fire." The pamphlet which Mr. Holyoake had in his mind was probably that terrific indictment of Louis Napoleon, one of the classics of the Revolution, which was published a few months later by Effingham Wilson. If Mazzini's letter, which must have made even imperial villainy squirm, had appeared earlier, this chapter would not have been written. But, like Orsini, I was impatient: so the manuscript was offered to Edward Truelove at Temple Bar. It was the beginning of a life-long friendship. Mr. Truelove was pleased with the piece that was submitted to him—almost as pleased, I think, as the young author himself. Yes, he would get it printed at once. But he had two suggestions to make. One was that the title of the pamphlet should read—"Tyrannicide: Is it Justifiable?" The other related to a name or *nom-de-plume* for the title-page. The manuscript was anonymous: it was intended to be anonymous. "The name," I said, "is nothing, the argument everything. The argument can stand by itself: the authority for it will add nothing to its weight, particularly an unknown authority." Mr. Truelove then suggested a *nom-de-plume*. "Well," I said, "if there is to be a name, it shall be my own." So the thing went forth. But nobody believed

the name to be other than fictitious. The pamphlet was said to be the work of a French exile. I was told myself that Louis Blanc was the author. Even workmen in the office who knew me and knew my name, when discussing the pamphlet and the prosecution, did not associate me with the authorship. It remained an open mystery to the end.[1]

The police of the Metropolis were vigilant in those days. It is likely that they acted under orders; for despatches had already been received from the French Government. Anyway, the pamphlet had not been on sale for more than a few hours before

[1] Mr. Harold Johnson, who used to write in Secular periodicals over the signature of "Anthony Collins," stated in the *Radical* for August, 1887, that an agent from the Home Office was sent in 1858 to search among his papers at Blackburn for the manuscript of "Tyrannicide." This curious proceeding he explained thus:—When Mr. Truelove was arrested, Mr. Johnson instructed him by telegraph to print the pamphlet entire in the next number of the *Investigator*, a periodical which he then edited and which Mr. Truelove published. A copy of the telegram, he surmises, must have been communicated to the Home Office. At all events, an agent from that department waited on Mr. Johnson for the purpose stated. Among the contributors to the *Investigator* was a gentleman named J. P. Adams. Confusing one Adams with another, the authorities appear to have got the notion that the document they wanted to obtain would be found in the possession of the editor of the *Investigator*. Such was Mr. Johnson's story. While sorting some old papers more than forty years after the publication, I came upon the original essay that had formed the foundation of the prosecuted pamphlet.

an inspector of police invited Mr. Truelove to accompany him to Bow Street. The invitation was so imperative that he was not allowed to do more than change one coat for another. That day I was taking my usual walk with a fellow compositor during the dinner hour towards the Strand. We had passed the book-shop at Temple Bar. Suddenly I was clutched by the arm. "Come, I want you: Truelove has been arrested." The person who spoke was urgent and excited. It was the wife of the publisher—a refined and accomplished lady, herself devoted to advanced ideas. I was enjoying a smoke at the time, but my pipe was effectually put out for the rest of the day. I went into the book-shop. There I learnt what had happened. I, the cause of the trouble, the real offender in the case, was ready to become a substitute for the publisher. What else could a poor compositor do? But this, I was told, would make two victims instead of one. Besides, the police, believing that I was a myth, had no warrant against me. Mr. Truelove remained in durance—only a few hours—till sufficiently substantial friends could be found to go bail for his appearance before the magistrate next morning.

The result of the proceedings at Bow Street was a foregone conclusion. Mr. Truelove was

committed for trial. The charge against him was that of having "unlawfully written and published a false, malicious, scandalous, and seditious libel of and concerning his Majesty the Emperor of the French, with the view to incite divers persons to assassinate his said Majesty." The charge itself was a false and scandalous libel. First of all, there was not the smallest intention on the part of author or publisher to incite anybody to do anything. Nor was there any incitement either, except such as may arise from indignation at the recital of past crimes. As for libel, the pamphlet could have been voted libellous only on the old doctrine —"the greater the truth, the greater the libel." The pamphlet, it is true, pointed out that the outrages of tyrants and usurpers are apt to inspire desperate men, and even sensitive and judicious men, to attempt the vindication of their country's rights and honour. If an adventurer violated his oath, dragged the foremost men of the country from their beds, cast the representatives of the people into dungeons, suppressed and dispersed the courts of justice, slaughtered thousands of unarmed people in the streets, shipped without charge and without trial tens of thousands of innocent citizens to a penal and pestiferous colony, made himself by these and other foul and infamous

means the master and oppressor of the people—was he therefore to be absolved from the consequences of his villainies? This was the question that was asked. A writer in the *Times*—the author of the "Letters of an Englishman," understood at the time to be Mrs. Grote, the wife of the historian of Greece—had declared that "a man who sets himself above the law invites a punishment beyond the law." The doctrine proclaimed by Mrs. Grote after the Coup d'Etat was merely re-asserted after the attempt of Orsini. But no name was mentioned in the pamphlet. All the same, said Mr. Bodkin, who prosecuted for the Crown, there could be no doubt as to the person meant. The description could apply only to his Majesty the Emperor of the French. The cap fitted him exactly. Where, then, was the falsehood? Mr. Truelove, however, was committed to take his trial before the Queen's Bench.

CHAPTER XXXVII

"A LAME AND IMPOTENT CONCLUSION"

THE prosecution of Edward Truelove was seen at once to be an attack on the liberty of public discussion. As such it was resented by most of the leading Radicals of the day. The prosecution was all the more resented because it had clearly been commenced at the instigation of a foreign Government and to appease a foreign despot. A Committee of Defence was formed; a fund was opened for defraying the expenses of the trial; and local committees in the provinces busied themselves in collecting subscriptions. John Stuart Mill contributed £20 to the Defence Fund. Among the other contributors were Harriet Martineau, Professor F. W. Newman, W. J. Fox, Joseph Cowen, James Stansfeld, P. A. Taylor, Dr. Epps, Abel Heywood, Edmond Beales, besides many more whose names, though forgotten now, were well known and even famous at the time. Charles Bradlaugh was appointed secretary to the committee, and James Watson ac-

cepted the office of treasurer. The duties of the committee were afterwards increased by a second press prosecution—the prosecution of a Polish bookseller in Rupert Street for publishing a pamphlet by three French exiles, Felix Pyat, Besson, and Alfred Talandier. It may be mentioned, as indicating the bitter spirit of the day, that the *Times*, which had seven years before printed diatribes as fierce as any in the two pamphlets, refused to advertise the appeal of the committee for subscriptions. Though the press was hostile, however, the public was not unfriendly; for the announcement that Henry J. Slack, eminent in later years as a microscopist, was going to deliver a lecture on the subject of the prosecutions, drew together a crowded and enthusiastic audience at St. Martin's Hall. Professor Newman saw more clearly than most people, not only the real character of the English pamphlet, but the consequences that would follow the success of the Government attempt to punish its publisher. "The question," he wrote, "is not whether Mr. Adams's doctrine is right or wrong, but whether, as an Englishman addressing Englishmen, he has a right to advocate it. Substantially he protests against the confused application of the word 'assassination,' similar to the confused application of the word 'murder' to all deeds of battle. It is permissible for a free citizen to argue

even against the law under which a felon has been condemned. If Mr. Adams may not endeavour to convince us that Orsini's deed, though punishable and punished at law, is not morally wrong, I do not see how Englishmen can retain the right of censuring the law at all. Free moral criticism is effectually stopped." As for the doctrine of tyrannicide, the sentiment embodied in that doctrine, said Professor Newman, "is that which for ages predominated among Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, the three nations which have been the chief feeders of our moral and intellectual life." "If," he added, "we have now outgrown certain sentiments and judgments of those three nations, it is rather too much to prosecute, or rather persecute, those who hold to the old opinion that lynch law against a treasonable usurper is better than no law at all."

The classical and scriptural doctrine against which so great a hubbub was raised in 1858 had not, however, lost favour even among modern statesmen and poets. Many examples were cited when the subject was of public interest. Two or three may be cited here. Walter Savage Landor was almost fanatical in his pronouncements. "I have," he wrote to the Marquis d'Azeglio, "never dissembled my opinion that tyrannicide is the highest of virtues, assassination the basest of crimes." Mr. Disraeli had published

in 1834 his "Revolutionary Epic," wherein occurred the well-known lines :—

> And blessed be the hand that dares to wave
> The regicidal steel that shall redeem
> A nation's sorrow with a tyrant's blood.

But only fourteen days before Orsini's attempt a poem of Matthew Arnold's on an incident in Greek history had appeared. And this is what the poet wrote :—

> Murder! but what is murder? When a wretch
> For private gain or hatred takes a life,
> We call it murder, crush him, brand his name.
> But when, for some great public cause, an arm
> Is, without love or hate, austerely raised
> Against a Power exempt from common checks,
> Dangerous to all and in no way but this
> To be annulled—ranks any man an act
> Like this with murder?

Quite as truly could the charge of incitement have been preferred against Matthew Arnold as against the author of the "Tyrannicide" pamphlet.

The prosecution—hateful to the people because it had been instituted at the instance of a Government whose origin and practices were alike odious—was fatal to the Ministry which undertook it. Lord Palmerston, only a few months before the Orsini affair, had swept the constituencies. Bright, Cobden, and Milner Gibson all lost their seats. Ministers had a stronger majority than any previous

Ministry for many years. But they truckled to a foreign Power, and they went speedily to pieces. The fate of Lord Palmerston's Government is an object lesson in English politics. Although the Prime Minister had as Foreign Secretary exhibited indecent haste in recognising the Government of Dec. 2nd, the favour he had shown it was not reciprocated seven years later. Following the Orsini attempt there came despatches from Count Walewski, Minister of Foreign Affairs to Louis Napoleon, that were almost insolent in tone. England was charged with harbouring murderers, and was practically commanded to restrict her own liberties for the protection of the French Emperor. And swashbucklers of the French army demanded to be led against what they called a "den of assassins." It was under the pressure of these insults and menaces that the Government of Lord Palmerston ordered the prosecution of Dr. Bernard, commenced proceedings against the publishers, and even had the supreme folly to attempt a revision of English laws. So much subserviency could not be tolerated. When the Conspiracy Bill—otherwise popularly known as the French Colonels' Bill—came up for consideration, an amendment proposed by Mr. Milner Gibson, who had returned to Parliament for a new constituency, shattered to pieces

one of the most powerful Ministries of the century. Lord Palmerston, as a consequence, surrendered the seals of office to Lord Derby.

The new Government did not abandon the prosecutions; but it showed an evident reluctance to press them; and it eventually succeeded, with the aid of an unprincipled counsel, in finding a way out of the difficulty. The prosecution of Mr. Truelove commenced in February; but the lame and impotent conclusion of the affair was not reached till the end of July. Meantime, there had been informal negotiations between the Committee of Defence and the Law Officers of the Crown. It was intimated to the Government at the outset that the author was ready to surrender himself, provided the proceedings against the publisher were withdrawn. But the offer was declined. This was in February. Three months later the author committed a grave indiscretion: he got married. It was one of the best day's work he ever did, though he saw afterwards that it would have been more prudent to wait till the so-called libel business was settled. During the time he was taking a brief holiday in the Isle of Wight, wandering from Ryde to Brading, from Brading to Ventnor, from Ventnor to Newport, from Newport to Ryde again, with no postal address anywhere, an important change occurred in the legal

situation. The Crown authorities, who had refused the proposal of the Defence Committee, now offered to accept it. The very night the author returned from his short honeymoon he attended a meeting which was called to decide whether he or his friend Truelove should run the risk of a trial that might or might not end in a residence of six or twelve months in one of her Majesty's gaols. Of course he placed himself unreservedly in the hands of the committee. That body, however, seeing in the overtures of the Government clear evidence of weakness in the prosecution, declined to help the legal advisers of the Crown out of the quagmire. Preparations were therefore made for the coming trial.

It was the desire of the defence that a question which involved a distinct violation of the liberty of the Press should be fought out before a British jury. Eminent counsel were retained. Mr. Edwin James had at that time achieved considerable popularity by an impassioned address he had delivered at the Old Bailey on behalf of Dr. Bernard. It was supposed, too, that he had every prospect of rising from office to office till he finally reached the Woolsack. But he must even then have begun to disclose to keen observers those faults of character which wrecked his career. Dickens, after a single

sitting, as Edmund Yates records, drew his portrait as Mr. Stryver in "A Tale of Two Cities." Soon after the inglorious conclusion of the Truelove trial, he found it necessary to take flight to New York, where he made a further mess of his life. But these things had not happened when Edwin James was thought to be the best man at the Bar to conduct a great trial. The selection turned out to be a blunder. We were all expecting a new vindication of the right of public discussion. What we did not know was that intrigues were in progress to defeat the desired object; that the man who had been chosen to lead the defence was going to betray it.

The trial was finally fixed for June 22, 1858. It was to take place in Westminster Hall before Lord Chief Justice Campbell and a special jury. The prosecution was to be conducted by the Attorney-General (Sir Fitzroy Kelly), Mr. Macauley, Mr. Bodkin, and Mr. Clarke, while associated with Mr. James for the defence were Mr. Hawkins, Mr. Simon, and Mr. Sleigh. I was working late, as usual, the night before. Mr. Truelove came to me in a state of great indignation and excitement. He had just been informed that the case was to be compromised. Edwin James, without consulting the defendant or the defendant's friends, had settled

the matter with the Law Officers of the Crown. It was never known what was the consideration. All that was known was that cause and client had both been sold. But, I said, could not new counsel be retained? No, it was too late. Well, then, could not one of the juniors act for us? No, it was contrary to the etiquette of the Bar. So a pregnant opportunity was lost. The rights of a British subject, the rights of the public itself, had been sacrificed to satisfy the conveniences of the Government. Then came the farce at Westminster Hall. Sir Fitzroy Kelly solemnly informed the court that the indictment would not be tried; that he understood his learned friend was prepared on behalf of his client, who was "a respectable tradesman, and the father of a large family," etc., etc. And then Mr. James solemnly disavowed that either the writer or the publisher of the pamphlet had any intention to incite, etc.; that Mr. Truelove, believing, etc., had agreed to discontinue the sale of the pamphlet; and that he trusted, etc. And then Lord Campbell solemnly told the jury that it was satisfactory to know, etc.; that the pamphlet was such, etc., that he should have said if the trial had proceeded, etc.; that the defendant had acted with the utmost propriety in the course he had taken, etc. And then the jury

solemnly returned a verdict of not guilty. And so the solemn farce ended.

The prosecution was begun by Sir Richard Bethell under the Government of Lord Palmerston, and was abandoned by Sir Fitzroy Kelly under the Government of Lord Derby. It would probably not have been begun at all if a less subservient Minister had been in office. As it was, Lord Derby and his colleagues were no doubt greatly relieved when they found that they had to deal with so obliging a gentleman as Edwin James. But the mischief did not end there; for the very changes in the law which were defeated in 1858 were effected at a later date without anybody seeming to know much about it. Thus was the liberty of discussion restricted. And thus did it become perilous to show that the slaughter of Garibaldians at Mentana was simply another challenge to tyrannicides. It was on this occasion that Du Faillu, reporting to the French Government how Italian patriots had been mown down in swathes, exultantly exclaimed: "The Chassepot has done wonders!" An indignant protest, warning the perpetrator of the outrage of the consequence of his misdeeds, though printed and prepared for publication, had to be suppressed. So were despots and usurpers protected from fitting condemnation,

while the very danger which Professor Newman had anticipated befell the country. But an inexorable fate asserted itself at last. Twelve years later the despot and usurper who had triumphed on the Boulevards disappeared in shame and ignominy amidst the blood and smoke of Sedan.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE WORKING MEN'S COLLEGE

FACILITIES for the higher education of the people were far from abundant in the middle of the last century. Even mechanics' institutes were few and far between. But scant as were these facilities, it almost seemed that the supply was equal to the demand. The masses of the community, indeed, were so ignorant that they placed little or no value on education of any sort. Nor had they grown much more enlightened towards the end of the century; for many were the parents—mothers especially—who, when Mr. Forster's Education Bill had become law, resented the intrusion of the School Board officer. A few years after that event, I remember accompanying an antiquarian friend on a visit to some historic buildings in the neighbourhood of Tuthill Stairs, Newcastle. We were surprised to notice the effect of our appearance—women hurrying their children into the houses, or hiding them in other ways. When we came to

inquire the cause of the commotion, we were told that we were thought to be officers of the School Board! It was really among the educated classes that the necessity for educating the people was first recognised. Mechanics' institutes and other similar enterprises were thus promoted, formed, and supported by persons who had no need for the establishments themselves. Precisely in the same way was that best of all institutions of the kind—the Working Men's College in London—set on foot.

The Rev. Frederic Denison Maurice, the founder of the College, was a distinguished scholar and divine. More than that, he was a distinguished friend of the people. He had been associated with Thomas Hughes and Charles Kingsley in what was known as the Christian Socialist Movement. And he was so much respected and beloved that I found myself, when any point or problem in the doctrine or practices of the Church of England struck me as absurd, asking the question: "How, then, can such things obtain the assent or approval of Mr. Maurice?" The question settled one difficulty at any rate: that there could be nothing inherently absurd in the matter, else so good and so able a man would not preach or conform to it. Yet I knew Mr. Maurice only from seeing and hearing

him occasionally at our college meetings. It was out of affection for the people, and especially the working people, that he conceived the idea of placing in the hands of as many as could reach or appreciate them the priceless advantages of a collegiate training. The venture was commenced in 1854 at a house in Red Lion Square, Holborn. After two years' successful operations there, the council announced in its second report that a freehold house, No. 45, Great Ormond Street, Bloomsbury, had been purchased for the further work of the college. The price of the house was £1,500; of this £500 was contributed by Mr. Maurice, and the rest raised on mortgage. So was permanency given to an institution which has conferred infinite benefit on many a struggling student.

The staff of the college—whose services were all voluntary of course—was probably as brilliant as that attached to any other college in the kingdom. Mr. Maurice was the principal. Associated with him were fifty gentlemen, every one of them eminent in art, science, or scholarship. The scholars were distinguished in the list of teachers by the degrees they had acquired at the Universities; the others were described as artists, sculptors, or members of the learned professions. Here are a few of the names:—John Ruskin, Thomas

Hughes, F. J. Furnivall, Llewellyn Davies, Lowes Dickinson, R. B. Litchfield, J. M. Ludlow, Godfrey Lushington, Vernon Lushington, Alexander Munro, Dante G. Rossetti, Thomas Woolner, Ford Madox Brown, Frederic Harrison, Edward Burne Jones. Mr. Ruskin taught a drawing class; Mr. Furnivall taught classes in grammar and in the structure and derivation of English words; and the author of "Tom Brown's School Days," still the best book for boys ever written, besides other work in the college conducted, or wanted to conduct, so that the physical as well as the intellectual culture of the student should not be neglected, a boxing class! Teachers and students—at least one-third of the latter belonged to the artizan class—constituted a happy family both at Red Lion Square and at Great Ormond Street; for perfect equality prevailed among all. The only paid officer connected with the college in my time was, I think, the secretary; and this office was held by an old Chartist, Thomas Shorter, whose name I recollected to have seen attached to contributions in *Thomas Cooper's Journal.*

My circumstances when I joined the Working Men's College in the autumn of 1855 were not particularly conducive to study. Being, however, in some sort of settled employment now, the old

longing for better education asserted itself. Wherefore I entered three of the classes in the college—Latin, English Grammar, and the Structure and Derivation of Words. But the pursuit of knowledge in my case was necessarily attended by many difficulties. I find in my old diary statements of the conditions under which compositors had to earn their daily bread in the office of a weekly newspaper. An entry for July 12th, 1855, reads thus:—"Worked without intermission for forty hours; slept for twelve, with many intermissions." Other entries show that long hours in the middle of the week were the invariable rule. Monday was our only regular day, and then we worked, or waited for work, from nine o'clock in the morning till eight o'clock at night. "On Tuesday," the old record runs, "we begin at eight, nine, or ten o'clock. From that time till the paper goes to press we work without intermission. Not without interruption, though, especially on Wednesday morning. Always midnight on Wednesday, frequently early hours of Thursday morning, before the last pages are ready for stereotypers. Thus nearly forty hours of continuous work—standing nearly all the time, for to sit is to fall asleep, and run the risk of pieing all the matter we may have in our sticks, as has really happened

several times in my own case." The rest of the week we had little to do, except distributing our type ready for the next. But the leisure we got in that way was poor compensation for the excessive toil that preceded it. That excessive toil, moreover, was an indifferent preparation for the study of languages. All the same, the classes were delightful, though I had to give up the Latin from sheer inability to rivet the attention.

The English classes were conducted by Mr. Furnivall. Our tutor was a remarkable man at that date, but he has become a much more remarkable man since. A quarter of a century later he was considered to have done so much excellent work in connection with the study of English philology that he was awarded a pension of £150 a year. It was said at the time that he was the founder of more literary societies than any man living. The Early English Text Society, the Chaucer Society, the New Shakspeare Society, the Society for the Publication of old English Ballads—these are among the learned bodies which owe their existence to his untiring efforts. And the list of books he has edited for the various societies forms a most interesting catalogue of early English literature. Dr. Furnivall's seventy-sixth birthday fell on Feb. 4th, 1901. The occasion

was celebrated in a unique and appropriate fashion. A year or more previous fifty of the foremost students and professors of English in different parts of the world—Germans, Americans, Frenchmen among them—combined together to do him honour. They presented him with an old boat —he declined to accept a new one; they persuaded him to sit for his portrait; and they each contributed to a collection of essays and papers which, along with a bibliography of Dr. Furnivall's own productions, was published in a handsome volume by the Clarendon Press on his next birthday. Dr. Furnivall is not only a scholar, but a good deal of an athlete—at least he was even after he had entered his sixties. Like his friend, Tom Hughes —Tom was a term of endearment in this case—he did not, while cultivating the intellectual, neglect the physical element of man. When he had reached the age of sixty-one, and was president of the Maurice Rowing Club, he is recorded to have won in a single season no fewer than three prizes for his skill as a sculler. From what has just been said it will be gathered that he retained at seventy-six his old affection for boating on the river.

But we must hark back to 1855. Our class evenings were exquisite. Part of the time Mr. Furnivall took the words as they followed in the

dictionary—dissecting them, showing their origin, and tracing their transformation in sound, meaning, and spelling. Afterwards we read Chaucer and Shakspeare, getting to the root and pursuing the history of every word the poets used. Mr. Furnivall was at that time pale, handsome, and less than thirty. The members of his class were mostly working men. But our tutor put on no airs, as indeed none of the other tutors did. He was a friend and companion even more than a teacher —absolutely one of ourselves. It was his delight to take his class on walking or boating excursions on the Sunday. I remember one glorious afternoon at Kew, for I could not often join the party. Another summer afternoon I remember being at Hampstead, when teacher and class came pelting along the road with coats over their arms. Mr. Furnivall on other occasions invited the students to his chambers after lessons. I joined them one winter's night. The chambers were in Ely Place, Holborn. Every nook and corner was filled with books—all treasures of literature. Here we sat over biscuits and coffee till an advanced hour of the morning, talking or listening to talk about poets and poetry, and languages and literature, and having such a feast of reason and flow of soul as almost never was since Shakspeare

had his bout with Ben Jonson at the Mermaid. Ely Place, closed to all intruders by an iron gate in Holborn, was perhaps then the only locality where an ancient custom of the Charlies was still observed. Anyway, we heard the watchman crying in the street below—"Past two o'clock, and a frosty morning." But Dr. Furnivall in those days burnt much midnight oil in his studies, rarely retiring to bed, he told us himself, till five hours "ayont the twal."

Three of the students of the college acquitted themselves so well that they were elected to the Council of Teachers—Rossiter, Roebuck, and Tansley. Rossiter was held in high favour and esteem both by professors and students. And he eminently deserved the position he held, on account alike of his genial qualities, his capacity for acquiring knowledge, and his readiness at all times to impart what he knew to others. Influenced probably by the commanding and attractive character of Maurice, Mr. Rossiter became a clergyman himself. Some ten years after the period I have been writing about, he was instrumental in founding another college in the metropolis—the South London Working Men's College, of which Professor Huxley was for a long time the principal. Ten years later again this institution was removed to Kennington Lane,

Lambeth, where Mr. Rossiter, placing his own books at the disposal of the poorer classes of the neighbourhood, opened the first Free Library in South London. Subsequently, a few pictures being added to the library, this small exhibition became the germ of the South London Fine Art Gallery, which, in 1895, having been acquired by the Camberwell Vestry, was converted into the permanent establishment that is now known as the Passmore Edwards Art Gallery and Technical Institute. I was brought into contact with Mr. Rossiter again some time in the early nineties—how I can't recollect. But at that time he was a regular contributor of dramatic and other notes to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*. When he died in 1897, the event was sympathetically noticed by all the London and many of the provincial newspapers; for he was, as the *Times* said of him, and as I can testify from personal knowledge, "much beloved by all whose privilege it was to share his friendship."

I cannot close this chapter without confessing that large numbers of working people owe a deep debt of gratitude to the eminent and enthusiastic gentlemen who, placing their scholarship at the service of the artizans of London, helped to establish a real bond of union between the richer and poorer classes of the country.

CHAPTER XXXIX

MANCHESTER

THE irritating nature of my employment in London, coupled with the miserable wages I was able to earn, owing to the many hours of weary idleness we had to pass in waiting for "copy," induced me to accept the offer of a situation in Manchester. I had suffered so much, mentally and bodily, from the treatment I had received in common with the rest of our little companionship, that it was no longer a mystery to me why working men hated their employers. If others endured what I had endured, the animosity was not only excusable, but justified. The root of the mischief was want of thought or consideration for people whose lot it was to toil in shop or factory. Indifference to wrongs and evils that can often be easily removed —how can it help but breed bitterness and wrath? Had the captains of every industry behaved to the rank and file as men ought always to behave to men, they would not have planted those seeds

of strife which have brought in recent years so plentiful a crop of strikes and disasters. Bad masters sowed the wind, and good masters are now reaping the whirlwind. But I am digressing.

Manchester at the end of the fifties had stoned its prophets. But it was still the seat and centre of the political school to which it had given its name. Mr. Bright, handsome and portly, was often seen in its streets, often heard on its platforms. The Free Trade Hall was filled to overflowing whenever any great question was to be discussed. It was there that I heard Kossuth ; it was there that I heard Mason Jones ; it was there that I heard Washington Wilks. Kossuth we know ; but who were Jones and Wilks ? Jones was an eloquent lecturer, Wilks an eloquent politician of the day. The Hungarian exile met with a magnificent reception. The audience seemed to cheer itself hoarse. A few years later I heard Kossuth again. It was somewhere in Clerkenwell. But the audience then was miserably scanty. Between it and the applauding thousands in Manchester the contrast was terrible. The fickle populace had forgotten or forsaken its idol. No wonder that the poor exile, cast down and almost broken-hearted, soon afterwards retired to another clime. The great hall in which so many stirring scenes were enacted

was one of the products of the corn-law agitation. Mr. George Wilson, the chairman of the association that conducted the movement, was yet an active force in the town. But when he and other colleagues of his in the old organization ventured to suggest an advance in the direction of Parliamentary reform, they were described and assailed, I recollect, as the "rump of the League." There came a time, however, as we may see later, when Manchester again led the van.

Amusing to me, when I became a resident in the town, was the evil reputation I had heard given to it by the chance acquaintance I had met on the road only four or five years before. The people, I found, were up to the average in behaviour and kindliness—above the average in intelligence and cleanliness. There was not, I thought, a more neighbourly woman in the world than the Manchester woman. As for cleanliness, she took as much pride in the front of her house as she did in her own kitchen, whereas women in other parts I have known never think of even sweeping their pavements, no matter what the filth or foulness accumulated around. But there were black spots about. Part of Deansgate was a nest of thieves. The Irk was a foul and inky ditch, and the Irwell and the Medlock were scarcely less loathsome. The Town Hall was

in King Street, and the site of the present municipal palace was a camping-ground for Corporation dust carts.

Of course there was a better side to the town. The first Free Library was established in a building that had been erected by the followers of Robert Owen, and branch libraries were being opened in different districts. The Athenæum was a flourishing institution, as was the Mechanics' Institute, and a Working Men's College was offering immense advantages to poor students. Pomona Gardens in one direction and Bellevue Gardens in another were favourite resorts of the people. Charles Calvert was manager of the principal theatre, and Charles Hallé was giving periodical concerts of the highest quality. Chetham Library was a restful resort, where the quaintest of quaint volumes could be consulted by everybody. Charming places surrounded the town. Whalley Range was a residential suburb of exquisite beauty; Brooks's Bar was away in the country; Greenheys Fields were charged with rural walks; beyond Moss Lane the Moss-side Fields afforded opportunity for a lovely ramble to Northenden. Chorlton-cum-Hardy was a delightful little village within reach of Hulme on a Sunday morning in summer. For Saturday afternoon excursions — factories and

workshops and warehouses were all closed at mid-day or soon after—there were Bowden and Alderley Edge and many another point of attraction. So Manchester was not such a bad place after all.

The situation I accepted was that of reader and compositor in a small jobbing office. Our principal business was the production of the *Alliance News*, the organ of the United Kingdom Alliance. Mr. Thomas H. Barker was then the secretary of the society, and Mr. Henry Septimus Sutton the editor of the paper. Mr. Barker was a man of great energy, absolutely absorbed in his work; Mr. Sutton was a bit of a poet ("Emerson thought some of his pieces were worthy of George Herbert") who ingeniously turned almost every event of the day into an argument for the prohibition of the liquor traffic. What I chiefly recollect about the Alliance at that time was the long, elaborate, and masterly reports which Mr. Samuel Pope, the hon. secretary, used to produce for the annual meetings of the society.[1] Yes, I recollect another thing. A question had been submitted by the Alliance to the clergy and ministers of religion throughout the country, and hundreds of letters had been received in reply.

[1] Mr. Pope was the eminent Parliamentary barrister who died in 1901 at the age of seventy-five.

These replies were printed in the *News*, and passed through my hands as reader. I was astonished at the loose, slovenly, and ungrammatical way in which educated men—all of whom had been trained in colleges and some of whom had won degrees in universities—expressed themselves. It occurred to me that these gentlemen had spent so much time in the study of Latin and Greek and Hebrew that they had forgotten to learn English.

The change I had made was, as Mr. Epps said of his cocoa, grateful and comforting. I had regular work, regular hours, regular wages—always my evenings at home or to myself, except once a week. I had now several hours of a night which I could spend in my own pleasures or my own pursuits—in reading, writing, taking a stroll, or attending a class. Life was no longer a weariness: it was a real enjoyment. I was happy and contented: so was my dear companion. There wasn't a happier or more contented couple in all Manchester. The men with whom I worked, too, were generally of a higher order than those I had encountered in London. While there was less dissipation among them, there was also, as may be supposed, a more refined taste. Every man in the establishment, and indeed every boy, took an

intelligent interest in public affairs. The talk was of politics, of literature, of cheering events of the day. Men and boys read the newspapers, the magazines, books ; and they had views of their own about all they read. The Free Libraries were a boon and a blessing to many of them. Besides borrowing books from the libraries, we had a book club of our own. Thus we kept ourselves abreast of the culture of the time. Better than all, I found lifelong friends in Manchester, one in the office, others elsewhere. The friend I made in the office was one of the gentlest, best read, and most refined gentlemen I have ever met.[1] It was in such sweet companionship at home or on pedestrian excursions among the picturesque dales and peaks of Derbyshire that my four

[1] An amusing story may be told of this old friend. He was very dark, bearded like the pard, and somewhat free and easy in his attire. When he donned a big black slouch hat and hung it over his left ear, he looked very much like a corsair or a cowboy. For some such reason we gave him the name of Dirk Hatteraik. It chanced that a fellow-compositor—he was working in the office of the *Manchester Guardian* at the time—had been tormented by the trespasses and depredations of a neighbour's fowls among his flower-beds. To get rid of the nuisance he conceived the dangerous project of scattering poisoned grain in his garden. A chemist had told him that he could have what poison he required, provided he brought a witness to certify that the drug would be used for no unlawful purpose. Would Dirk be his witness? Certainly he would. Forth the pair sallied into Market Street.

years in Manchester passed like a summer holiday.

There was a Working Men's College in Manchester too. I made other friends at the college. The classes I attended were conducted, the one by a Unitarian minister, the other by a curate of the Church of England. The Unitarian minister was the Rev. William Gaskell, husband of the famous novelist; the curate of the Church of England was the Rev. William Thackeray Marriott, who, leaving the Church, became first a barrister, then a member of Parliament, and finally the Right Honourable Sir W. T. Marriott. Mr. Gaskell was a master of literature. I thought at the time that he was the most beautiful reader I had ever heard. Prose or poetry seemed to acquire new lustre and elegance when he read it. Our literary evenings

I think it was to Jewsbury's—the same family as Geraldine Jewsbury, Carlyle's Geraldine. A bland young chemist came to the counter. "I have called for that poison," said the customer; "this is my witness." The bland young chemist's face assumed various expressions—curiosity, anxiety, suspicion, doubt. Without saying a word, he retired behind a screen. There was a sound of whispering; then heads appeared above the screen, peeping at the customer and the witness; and then the bland young chemist returned with an apologetic air. "Sorry to say, sir," he said, "but we are quite out of poisons just now!" Dirk—his real name was Doughty, and he had been associated with Edwin Waugh in his early days at Wakefield—Dirk was never happier than when telling this tale against himself.

under Mr. Gaskell were ambrosial evenings indeed.[1] Mr. Marriott's class was devoted to the History of England. The reverend gentleman was as little like a clergyman as he was like a costermonger. There was nothing clerical—nothing even conventional—about him. Free and easy in his manners, he was as familiar with the members of his class as they were with each other. Even his lectures, if they could be called lectures, were notable for their freedom from the least sign of pedantry. It was really a conversation on historic subjects that he carried on with the working men who sat before him. Mr. Marriott's views, moreover, especially on the controversy between the

[1] Mr. Gaskell encouraged his students to write essays on such subjects as pleased them, and submit the papers to him. The essays, having been read and corrected in the meantime, were criticised at the next meeting of the class. I tried my hand more than once. One of the essays dealt with the republican idea. Protesting against the notion that the American Republic was to be considered a genuine republic, the daring essayist hazarded the statement that the people of the United States were "far on the way to become Red Indians themselves." Yet the astounding assertion was not so bad a shot after all; for, more than thirty years later, the following paragraph went the round of the English papers:—"Considerable sensation has been caused in the United States by a lecture given by Professor Starr, a well-known anthropologist of Chicago University. In the course of his remarks, the professor declared that, if intermarriage with immigrants were to be stopped, Americans would soon become Indians again."

Parliament and Charles the First, were of a very advanced character. Our old tutor has figured in many prominent transactions since 1859, but in none which was more calculated to win the esteem and regard of his old scholars. Besides literature and history, I tried my hand at logic, under Professor Newth of the Lancashire Independent College. But logic, literature, and history, so far as classes were concerned, had to be abandoned when the Working Men's College, greatly to the disappointment of the students, was merged into Owens College, then situated in an old mansion in Deansgate, but now located in a palatial home of its own.

While gratifying my taste for such studies as I had time or capacity for pursuing, I did not forget the republican idea. Whenever chances presented themselves, the editors of the local papers—the *Examiner*, the *Guardian*, and the *Courier*—were pestered with letters in defence of Mazzini or in explanation of revolutionary enterprises. With the view of reviving interest in the Reform question, I wrote, printed, and published at my own expense a rather heavy "Argument for Complete Suffrage." But nobody wanted the pamphlet, and I was burdened with a debt which took me a long time to pay off. Also I wrote,

and here and there delivered, a lecture on a still heavier subject—"The Province of Authority in Matters of Opinion." This was printed too, but nobody wanted it either. However, a peculiar opportunity for getting said what I wanted said occurred in the summer of 1859. Somebody speculated on the publication of a weekly paper called the *Buxton Visitor*. It was printed in our office. The speculators had no notion of what was wanted for even an ephemeral journal. All they supplied was a list of the visitors to the Derbyshire town, with of course the advertisements. The rest of the matter had to be found by the printer. I was asked to write the leading articles—gratuitously of course. Yes, I said, if I was allowed to choose my own subjects and treat them in my own way. It was the time when Louis Napoleon went to war for what he called an idea—the idea subsequently taking the substantial form of a couple of Italian provinces. Well, I pegged away at the war and other questions all through the season. The summer butterflies who fluttered about Buxton must have been much surprised when they read, if they did read, the fiery lucubrations that occupied the leading columns of the *Visitor*. At that time I was rejoiced when I could get my opinions before the public, anyhow or anywhere.

I would write anything for nothing if I approved of it—nothing for anything if I did not. A quack doctor wanted his wretched treatise revised, and an invitingly handsome sum was offered me to do the work. I refused. Great was the astonishment of the smug printer, who went regularly to church with silk hat and prayer-book of a Sunday morning, when I politely declined a proposition which he thought any poor devil in my situation would jump at. "Old Jacky," as we called him, did not understand how anybody could be fool enough to make a conscience of writing.

Mr. Ruskin, during my time, came to Manchester to lecture on some art subject. The chair, I remember, was taken by the Mayor—then Mr. Ivie Mackie. His worship was a spirit merchant—a man of liberal sentiments, but not, I thought, very intellectual. Stout and stolid, he sat in the chair without moving a muscle of his face or betraying the least interest in the subject. Presently, however, Mr. Ruskin quoted Goldsmith's epistle to Lord Clare for the gift of a haunch of venison :—

> Thanks, my lord, for your venison, for finer or fatter
> Ne'er ranged in a forest or smoked on a platter ;
> The haunch was a picture for painters to study,
> The fat was so rich, and the lean was so ruddy.

Here was something the Mayor could understand.

It probably revived recollections of feasts he had enjoyed. Anyhow, he laughed consumedly. I think it was the only time he smiled or showed any intelligence throughout the discourse. As for Mr. Ruskin—I had not then read any of his books, and knew little or nothing of his style as a writer of pure and beautiful English—I am afraid I was not very much impressed with either his appearance or his performance. Admiration for the man and the author came later.

CHAPTER XL

"THE NATIONAL REFORMER"

ONE Sunday, in the winter of 1859-60, Charles Bradlaugh, who still called himself "Iconoclast," was announced to lecture in Manchester. I had not seen him since the ignominious collapse of the "Tyrannicide" trial. But we were good friends then, and always afterwards. I had pleasant recollections, too, of an afternoon and evening which my wife and I, fresh from our honeymoon, had spent at his home in Hackney. Of course I went to hear him in Manchester. The expedition had a comical consequence. A baby had come to us by that time, and our little household in Hulme was further augmented by a visit from my wife's sister. Nothing had been said when I left home about company to dinner. After his morning's lecture, however, I asked the lecturer to come and take "pot luck" with me. The invitation was readily accepted—all the more readily because, he said, he had something to say to me. There was

consternation in Cuba Street when I landed with a visitor—not because the visitor was not welcome, but because nothing had been provided for his entertainment. The feast (suitable to our means and circumstances) consisted of a small steak, a few potatoes, and an apple pudding—the first article on the *menu* barely enough for three, certainly not for four. But the ladies were equal to the occasion. Bradlaugh and his host dined on steak and potatoes in a parlour not much bigger than a cupboard, while the hostess and her sister did the best they could with potatoes and pudding in the kitchen! It was rather a memorable event, that Sunday dinner, for it resulted in the end in a complete diversion of the current of my career.

Down to that moment I had had no notion of ever rising to any higher position than that of printer's reader. I had absolutely no ambition beyond that. Work of any honest sort I was willing to do for a living; but literature, so far as I had any capacity for pursuing it, was, I thought, a thing too sacred to be associated with pelf. The hands were for wages; but the brain was for nobler uses. It was a degradation of intellect to accept payment for its products. The idea was romantic. Nevertheless, I have never been able to get thoroughly rid of it. When I heard that men like Thornton

Hunt or George Augustus Sala wrote, not what they approved or believed, but what they thought would please their patrons or the public, I could feel nothing but contempt for them. Such doings were dishonest, and worse—they were a prostitution of the intellect. Nor have I to this day been able to get over a feeling of utter disgust when I hear of political journalists transferring their services as readily as they change their garments from one party paper to another. It has luckily been my good fortune to fall in with directors of the press who have respected at all times the conscientious convictions of their subordinates. And these subordinates of the press, I am satisfied, would have done better work and earned a wider respect if, having convictions, they had always insisted on keeping them in mind. But I am digressing again.

Mr. Bradlaugh, after that comical little dinner in Manchester, unfolded a scheme which some of his friends in Sheffield were promoting for the establishment of a weekly paper. It was to be Radical in politics, and Freethought in theology. Would I become one of the political contributors? The proposition took me aback. It had never entered my head that I could be a contributor to anything. The *Buxton Visitor* had not at that time cast its effulgent light over the world. Even

if it had, it would have counted for nothing. It was true that I had written a few letters to the papers; but these also counted for nothing. Mr. Bradlaugh reminded me that I had written an essay on Sir John Eliot for one of his earlier periodicals. Still I hesitated. The more I hesitated the more my friend pressed his point. Well, I would try. The result was that the contributions of Caractacus appeared every week in the *National Reformer* for many years—until, in fact, other duties prevented the writer from continuing them. Mr. Bradlaugh was an indulgent editor, for never was a single article rejected or a single sentence altered. Caractacus's effusion was generally the chief political item in the *National Reformer*. But Mr. Bradlaugh accompanied his proposition with a promise—the promise to pay a modest price for each contribution. Though the promise had no weight with me, and I did not hold it binding, it was not altogether vetoed, for my small family would likely become larger and my small income more inadequate. As everybody knows, Bradlaugh's financial circumstances were never very prosperous; but I owed infinitely more to him for comfort and help in adversity than the insignificant score I wiped off the slate when I obtained permanent employment in Newcastle-on-Tyne.

About the time the *National Reformer* was projected, a notable Yorkshireman was returning to England after a few years' residence in America. This was Joseph Barker. Mr. Barker was a man of great natural ability. Whether in writing or in speaking, he had an incisive power which few other men of his time had. But he was plausible rather than convincing. Nor was he much abashed, as we shall see, when his own arguments were brought in evidence against him. If Mr. Barker had been less given to change, less saturated with egotism and pomposity, he would have been a considerable power in the State. But he never seemed to know his mind for longer than a month or two together. Thus it happened that he boxed both the political and the theological compass. He began as a Methodist in Hanley; then he was a Unitarian in Lancashire; then a Barkerite in Newcastle; then a Freethinker in America; and then—well, he was still a Freethinker when he returned to the old country. Later he went back to some form of orthodoxy, and died in it. Barker's speeches and writings were spotted and dotted with epigrams and dogmas. Indeed, as I knew the man, he was nothing if not dogmatic. And he was as cocksure after every turnabout as if he had always crowed from the same dunghill.

Emerson's doctrine suited him exactly: "Consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds." No such hobgoblin troubled Joseph Barker. Whatever the particular housetop on which he happened to be strutting or swaggering, he spoke his mind "as hard as cannon balls," utterly regardless of the fact that he had not long before been hurling cannon balls from altogether different elevations. It is true, too, that he had audacity against the world. There occurred an instance that would have been sublime if it had not been so supremely ludicrous. When Barker was in America, he had written a letter against slavery which was perhaps the finest piece of vituperation he had ever penned. But when the Civil War broke out, he took to delivering lectures in favour of the Southern slaveowners. One night somebody produced and read the letter he had written a few years before. Was he the Joseph Barker who had written it? "No," was the astounding reply. "It is, as everybody knows, a physiological fact that the particles of the human frame are all changed in the course of every seven years. More than seven years have elapsed since that letter was written; therefore I am not the Joseph Barker who wrote it!"

But Joseph Barker at the end of 1859 was coming back to England with a great reputation as a Radical

and a Freethinker. He had owned and edited periodicals before he had crossed and re-crossed the Atlantic. His admirers also, I think, had presented him with a printing-press. Such of his old friends as still remained faithful to the wanderer proposed to repeat the gift, and set him up again with the means of reaching and preaching to the multitude. And then another idea was suggested. Instead of starting two papers to cover the same ground—one for Bradlaugh and the other for Barker—why not join forces, and make Barker and Bradlaugh joint editors of a single venture? The proposal was accepted. It was seen from the outset, however, that a joint editorship, which would work very well with two ordinary propagandists, would not work at all with two such masterful men as Bradlaugh and Barker. So a peculiar arrangement was adopted. When the *National Reformer* appeared on April 14th, 1860, it was found that the first half of it was under the exclusive direction of Joseph Barker, while the rest was under the exclusive direction of Charles Bradlaugh. Very soon Mr. Barker began to criticise, and then to denounce, the articles that appeared in Mr. Bradlaugh's half of the paper. These criticisms and denunciations took the insidious form of answers to imaginary correspondents. It was the contributions of Caractacus that seemed

to inspire the greatest dislike, especially when the subject under discussion was Garibaldi, or Louis Napoleon, or the American War ; for Mr. Barker, in respect to the rights of revolutionists and of negroes, was already beginning to turn his back upon himself once more. Of course there were rejoinders now and then, and once Caractacus threw down a challenge for a set discussion on some doctrine that had been asserted and disputed. But the whole thing became so ludicrous at length that the dual arrangement had to be abandoned. There was a sharp struggle for supremacy ; Mr. Bradlaugh became sole editor and eventually sole proprietor of the paper ; and the *National Reformer*, with the exception of a short interval during a serious illness, continued to be issued under his control and direction till the day he died.

Mr. Bradlaugh had other colleagues who proved in the end hardly more satisfactory than Joseph Barker. One of these was Edward Aveling ; another was Annie Besant.

Aveling was a young man of immense promise when he first connected himself with the *National Reformer*. The variety of his gifts, as then and later shown, was astonishing. A doctor of science of the University of London, he was also an actor, a dramatist, and a general compiler of scientific

works. He translated Ibsen, and he dramatised "Judith Shakspeare." For a year or two Aveling was a devoted adherent of Bradlaugh's and a regular contributor to the *National Reformer*. And then he went off into Socialism, played at man and wife with the daughter of Karl Marx, led what appears to have been a dissolute and abandoned life, and perished miserably in 1898. Eleanor Marx died by her own hand—driven to that act of desperation, as certain piteous letters of hers published afterwards indicate, by Aveling's unpardonable misbehaviour. The author of the mischief did not long survive the distracted Eleanor. When he in turn was carried to the grave, it was remarked that "not one of his brethren of the cause was present at Woking to bid farewell to his ashes." The reason of the neglect is to be found in an article in *Justice* for July 30th, 1898, explaining "what drove Eleanor Marx to suicide." It was not likely that "brethren of the cause" would have much respect for a man who had behaved so ill as Aveling had to the daughter of a high priest of Socialism.

Mrs. Besant became a recruit of Mr. Bradlaugh's about the same time as Dr. Aveling. But she remained longer in the ranks. And while she remained it must be admitted that she fought as

valiantly as any. Mr. Bradlaugh was not so much her friend as her idol. Able as she was, and strong-minded as she appeared to be, she was yet the very creature of circumstances. Mrs. Besant made the acquaintance of Thomas Scott, and became a Rationalist; made the acquaintance of Charles Bradlaugh, and became a Freethinker; made the acquaintance of Madame Blavatzky, and became a Theosophist. While she was associated with Bradlaugh, she was so influenced by the vigorous intellect of her idol that she imitated his manners in private, his gestures and methods of argument on the platform. And not very long afterwards she was worshipping a stout old lady who smoked cigarettes. It was simply amazing that she who could not accept the miracles of the Bible should find comfort in the miracles of the Mahatmas. Mrs. Besant had strained at a gnat, but had somehow managed to swallow a camel! The whirligig of her strange career, however, did not stop even at Theosophy. It was announced in 1894 that she had become a Buddhist. Seven years elapsed, and then we heard that she was touring the North of India in a Buddhist dress, proclaiming her belief that she was a Hindoo in a former birth! My acquaintance with the lady was but slight. Once she came to dinner with us. It was a modest

little repast enough; but she need not have distressed the poor hostess by speaking of it, as she did more than once, as a luncheon. Worse was to come. The hostess was also a mother. And the great lady—for she had lost none of her fine-lady airs by associating with the common people—completed her own discomfiture by the manner in which she pretended to kiss the children. "She need not have kissed them at all," said the mother; "but if she did, she might have put some heart and feeling into the process, instead of touching them as though they were toffy, and would soil her gloves." From all which it may be concluded that Mrs. Besant, her remarkable abilities notwithstanding, did not make a very favourable impression in our household.

To my friend W. C. Adams
A. Bradlaugh

(*From a photo taken in* 1860.)

[*To face p.* 407.

CHAPTER XLI

CHARLES BRADLAUGH

MR. BRADLAUGH filled so large a space in the public life of England at the close of the nineteenth century that it may not be uninteresting if I here tell a little of what I knew about him. It has already been mentioned that he came to be known to me, or I came to be known to him, in 1858. Thenceforward no opportunity of renewing the acquaintance was ever lost. From time to time he was in the habit of stopping at my house when he came round on his lecturing tours. Also at another period I accepted an invitation to breakfast with him every morning till he could tell me of something to my advantage. So in one way and another I knew him perhaps as intimately as most of his friends.

That Mr. Bradlaugh had his weaknesses goes without saying. Who is without these little disorders? There was, indeed, much egotism in the man, but it was a splendid egotism—at all events an egotism that may have surprised, but did not offend other people. Nor was it concealed from his associates. I

have heard him myself jocularly proclaim and confess the impeachment. And it had its origin in the knowledge he possessed of his own power. Mr. Bradlaugh—it was amusing at times to hear him talk of The Bradlaugh—would never have won the position he held in the country if he had not, like Lord Beaconsfield, thoroughly believed in himself. It was this belief in himself that lay at the root of the vanity which was the one conspicuous defect of his character. There are some, I dare say, who would hold that he was on occasion a trifle arrogant too. This trait, however, was so much more seeming than real that only persons who may have smarted from an angry lash of his tongue on a platform would magnify a small infirmity of temper.

People who saw nothing but the public side of Bradlaugh, which was probably, after all, his worst side, had little or no idea of his personal or social attractions. When enjoying the company of his friends, he was the most courteous and entertaining of men. It was delightful, for instance, to listen to his account of his adventures in the army. An officious clergyman, when as a mere youth he had begun to take part in public discussions, got him discharged from his employment. Rendered desperate by this scandalous intervention, he entered Her Majesty's service. The regiment in which he had

enlisted was a regiment of foot; but the sergeant of the foot regiment, owing a shilling to the sergeant of a dragoon regiment, paid him with a recruit! The young soldier was thus, without being consulted, transferred to the cavalry service. It was all one to Bradlaugh, however. Being sent to a barracks in Ireland, he speedily became popular with his comrades, who called him "Leaves," first because he used to talk to them about teetotalism, and next because he was fond of books. The tales he told of the tricks and escapades that marked his career in the Irish barracks "kept the table in a roar." But it was probably not often that he had leisure for these pleasant indulgences. That he had few amusements may be inferred from the intense and busy life that he led; yet the few he favoured were not clumsily pursued. Thus he was an accomplished hand at chess and billiards, while his feats as an angler, I understood, have seldom been surpassed.

Not the least striking nor the least admired of Bradlaugh's characteristics were his industry and his energy. Whatever his hand found to do he did it with all his might. His motto was "Thorough." And he lived up to it. I am satisfied that his days would have been longer in the land if, heeding the frequent warnings he

received, he had presumed less on the magnificent strength he had once enjoyed. But he could no more restrain himself than sparks can refrain from flying upwards. It was his custom at one period, while immersed all the week in commercial transactions (I think they had to do with a scheme for converting Italian sand into steel), to travel through the Saturday night away into the distant provinces, to deliver three lectures on the Sunday, and then on Sunday night to travel back again, so as to be ready for business on Monday morning. If he happened to stay all night at a friend's house (as he did often in mine), the fire-grate of his room would be found when he quitted it filled with fragments of the letters he had answered or of the documents he no longer needed.

Never a moment idle, he lived the lives of half a dozen ordinary men. No wonder that he collapsed at a comparatively early age. Bear in mind also that his lectures involved no slight amount of physical as well as intellectual strain. It is true that the preparations he made were not of an elaborate character when he had once mastered his theme. And, besides, he sometimes lectured on one subject many times over. But, however often he may have treated the theme, he always made it a point, he told me, of drawing up a fresh outline—

usually on a single sheet of note-paper—before going down to the lecture hall. Now and then he would seem to allow himself to be carried away in his discourse by his own passions and emotions. A very cataract of words, uttered with all the power and vehemence of a Stentor, would, on these occasions, sweep his audiences before him as in a torrent or a whirlwind. And then at the end of the final outburst he would sink to his seat on the platform—panting, perspiring, exhausted. The result of these efforts, as I often sorrowfully witnessed on the ride home, was such a waste of tissue as no living man, though he were as strong as a Samson, could long withstand.

Here I am tempted to tell a tale out of school. It would not have been told (or rather retold) if I did not know that the humour of the incident was as highly enjoyed by the gentleman chiefly concerned in it as by those who witnessed it. A party of friends from Newcastle were on their way to spend a brief holiday in Ireland. Among them was Thomas Burt, then newly-elected member of Parliament for Morpeth. They were seated in a train at Carlisle ready to start for Dumfries *en route* to Stranraer. Suddenly there was a commotion on the platform. A working man had been deprived of his seat, and was swearing and gesticulating at

large. The Newcastle travellers invited him to take a vacant seat among them. The man was still in a rage. "Joe Cowen shall hear of this," he muttered. The travellers pricked up their ears. "Joe Cowen?" said one of them: "who is he?" "Wat! nivvor hard of Joe Cowen? He's wor member, and winnot see a warking man wranged." "Oh, then, you come from Newcastle?" "No, aa divvent; aa belang Dor'm, and wark at Medomsley." "You will know Mr. Crawford, then?" (William Crawford was then the agent of the Durham miners.) "Aa shud think se—hard him at aall wor demonstrations." "Do you know Mr. Burt too?" "Wat! Tommy Bort? Aa ken him as weel as aa ken ma ain brither." Further leading questions and much silent chuckling. "Hard him at wor last demonstration. Tommy's varry good—varry good for a skuyl-room. But Charlie Bradlaugh's the man for the oppen air." Then followed great praise of Bradlaugh's oratory. And then the train stopped at a wayside station, and the man from Medomsley, bidding his acquaintances good-bye, staggered across the platform to the exit. "Good for a school-room," while it added to the mirth of the party, was accepted as a testimony that the intellectual predominated over the physical powers of the member for Morpeth.

The incident showed the estimation in which Mr. Bradlaugh was held by admirers all over the country. But some who listened to his stormy outbursts were at times inclined to say that the orator was a windbag. A different estimate would have been formed if they had heard him lecturing on what he called the "God Idea." No heat, no passion, never a superfluous word throughout that masterpiece of exposition and reasoning, as I once heard it in Newcastle. Equally effective, and for the same reason, was his speech at the Bar of the House of Commons, as well as other speeches of his in defence of the rights of his constituents. The sustained power and the dignified restraint of these deliverances must have struck everybody who read the reports of them. No statesman in Lords or Commons could have done better—perhaps so well.

When I knew Mr. Bradlaugh first, he was regarded by all the so-called respectable classes of the community as a dangerous, desperate, not to say disreputable character. Iconoclast, as he then called himself, found few friends save among pitmen, factory hands, and other sections of the working classes. If Mr. Bradlaugh had taken to breaking windows, or even breaking heads, instead of breaking images, he could not have been held in greater disfavour. Why, I remember on one occasion, when

he lectured at Wigan, the popular resentment against him was so strong that the hotel in which he took refuge was surrounded and invaded by a raging mob. Nor did public opinion change towards him during the whole period of his many years' struggle to obtain a seat in Parliament. Even after he had been duly elected, the House of Commons itself adopted the unconstitutional procedure of refusing to acknowledge his return. Nay, the officials of the House, acting on orders from above, expelled him from the precincts of St. Stephen's by physical force. And yet not many years after these unwarranted and outrageous transactions, prayers and supplications were offered up in churches and chapels for his recovery from a serious illness!

The conduct of the House of Commons in the matter of the election for Northampton was as foolish as it was mean. The House allowed itself to be led into a quagmire by Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Stafford Northcote, though the way to it seems to have been prepared by Mr. Speaker Brand. Blinded by prejudice and malice, the House committed the extraordinary folly of resolving that Mr. Bradlaugh, holding an unimpeached return for the borough of Northampton, should not be permitted to take the oath prescribed

by law. I remember writing of this piece of stupidity at the time :—"The resolution adopted on March 6th, 1882, has prolonged the Bradlaugh trouble. As a plaster may conceal a wound without healing it, so a resolution may obscure a difficulty without getting rid of it. John Wilkes was expelled from the House because he was detested by the Tories of his day. Subsequently, however, the House had to submit to the humiliation of expunging from its records the resolutions it had passed in reference to him. The opponents of the admission of Mr. Bradlaugh are preparing the way for a similar humiliation."

Here was a safe prophecy. Before nine years were passed the prophecy was fulfilled. The wrongful orders of 1882 were erased in 1891. But Mr. Bradlaugh was then lying on his death-bed. Nor did he live long enough to learn that the House of Commons had at last done him justice. Public feeling in respect to him, however, had by that time undergone a complete revulsion. He had won by his wise and urbane conduct in Parliament the good will of all classes and parties in the country. The Leader of the House, Mr. W. H. Smith, the successor of Sir Stafford Northcote, paid a respectful visit to the dying man's residence; and, when he was no more, speeches in lamentation of

the loss the country had sustained were made from both sides of the House—that very House from which only nine years before he had been forcibly, ignominiously, and in violation of law, expelled.

No public man within my recollection was the mark and object of more calumnies and falsehoods than Charles Bradlaugh. Repeated from mouth to mouth, from platform to platform, from pulpit to pulpit, these stories and inventions were often of the most puerile and paltry complexion. Almost every week the *National Reformer* denied this or that lie. But sometimes, when the offender was particularly offensive, he was compelled to apologise and send a handsome subscription to a charity fund in order to avoid a prosecution for libel. The most cruel falsehood of all, however, was circulated when Mr. Bradlaugh had been six years in his grave. It was contained in a book of reminiscences which Mr. C. A. Cooper, the editor of the *Scotsman*, published in 1897. Mr. Cooper therein asserted, on the alleged authority of a member of the House of Commons, that the Reform League at the period of the great Reform agitation had organized a riot in London, to be followed or accompanied by a series of fires, and that Mr. Bradlaugh, false and treacherous to his own colleagues, disclosed the plot to the Home Secretary, with the result that

there was no outbreak and no incendiarism. Mr. Bradlaugh may have been many things which people like Mr. Cooper's informant reprobate; but he was certainly neither a fool nor a scoundrel. I took the trouble to refer the matter to Mr. George Howell, who, as secretary of the Reform League from its commencement to its dissolution, was privy to all its proceedings. "The whole story," he wrote to me, "is a pure invention, a fabrication from beginning to end." And I suggested to Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner that she should, in vindication of her father's memory, so wantonly aspersed, demand from Mr. Cooper an explanation or an apology. The demand was made; but Mrs. Bonner was not favoured with an answer to her letters.

Meeting Mr. Cooper in Madeira in the spring of 1901, I called his attention to the injustice he had done to Mr. Bradlaugh. The statement he had published, he said, was made to him by an Irish member of Parliament, whose name he privately mentioned. If a new edition of his book should be issued, he would, he added, after what I had told him, certainly modify or withdraw the statement. As to not answering Mrs. Bonner's letters, he said that he abstained because he did not want to be drawn into a controversy.

CHAPTER XLII

THE SLAVEOWNERS' WAR

IT was while I was residing at Manchester, the seat and centre of the suffering which followed, that the civil war between North and South broke out in the United States. So I saw the beginning of that appalling period known as the Cotton Famine. The exigencies of the conflict compelled the Northern or Federal Government to blockade the Southern ports. Hence no produce from the Cotton States could reach the mills in Lancashire. Though the manufacturers made almost frantic efforts to obtain supplies elsewhere, the factories had gradually to close from one end of the county to the other. The state of the people was terrible; but the privations they endured, mitigated rather than removed by the organization of relief works, were borne with heroic fortitude—all the more heroic because, knowing the cause of the trouble in America, they refused to be misled into supporting a policy which, while it would have

terminated their own miseries, would have riveted afresh, and perhaps for centuries, the shackles of the slave.

The public mind of England was in a condition of strange ignorance respecting American affairs at the time the great struggle commenced. Some of us—friends of freedom everywhere—were familiar with the great Anti-Slavery Movement. William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and Theodore Parker were names that ranked in our calendar of braves alongside those of Joseph Mazzini, Louis Kossuth, and Victor Hugo. But the great bulk of the English people knew nothing of the struggle across the Atlantic—of the "irrepressible conflict" impending there, of the Underground Railway, of the Fugitive Slave Law, of the fight for Kansas and Missouri, of John Brown's heroic descent on Harper's Ferry. Even the party names—Republicans, Democrats, Free-Soilers—had little or no meaning for people here. Indeed, speaking generally, we were about as ignorant of American politics as we were of politics in Morocco or Bokhara. When, therefore, the war began with the bombardment of Fort Sumter, and the torch was set to a conflagration which veritable seas of blood failed for nearly four years to extinguish, the world at large was in a state of wonderment

as to the cause and merits of the quarrel. It was while the public mind was in a state of vacuity that an astute gentleman of Southern proclivities obtained possession of the public ear. This was Mr. James Spence, of Liverpool. Mr. Spence, writing long letters to the *Times*, set up the theory that the tariff, and not the negro, was the cause of the war. And as the Southern States were for Free Trade and the Northern States were for Protection, it was the Southern States, he contended, that were entitled to British sympathies. So was public opinion warped and misled at the outset.

The first clear note on the right side was sounded by John Stuart Mill in the *Westminster Review*. But before this note was struck, large numbers of our people and nearly all our newspapers had already taken sides. Mr. Mill's article, however, helped to arrest the spread of the heresy. We were paying the penalty, he said, of our neglect of contemporary events abroad. If we had kept ourselves informed of American affairs, we should never have fallen into the error of misunderstanding them. Then followed an exposition which made the whole quarrel as transparent as a point in our own polity. The Northern States, it was true, were not for uprooting slavery in the way that Garrison was. But they had adopted a policy which

would inevitably extinguish that hateful institution in the end. That policy was that slavery should not be permitted to extend beyond its present borders. But to limit slavery, as the slaveowners knew, was to throttle it. Slave labour could be profitably applied only to the simplest form of cultivation—the cultivation of cotton, for instance. Cotton, however, exhausted the soil in a moderate number of years. Maryland and Virginia, exhausted already, had become mere slave-breeding States. Other States were following in the same downward groove. If, therefore, the "peculiar institution" was to be preserved, fresh slave territories must be opened. But the Northern States had set their faces against any such procedure. Moreover, the election of Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency of the Republic had emphasised the determination of all the free parts of the country. What, then, was to be done? Slavery was threatened with ruin. There was only one way to save it. The Slave States must secede from the Union, get rid of the hampering restrictions of Abolitionists, and proclaim a great Slave Empire. The war which followed this attitude and action was thus to all intents and purposes a war for slavery. The working people of England soon saw to the root of the issue, though other classes did not.

The question that was going to be fought out in America, that was going to cost hundreds of thousands of lives, that was going to lay waste tracts of territory almost as large as Europe itself, was the greatest question of the centuries. It was greater than the Great Rebellion, greater than the French Revolution, greater than the War of Independence; for it involved the slavery or freedom of the worker all over the world. The leaders of the Southern Confederacy were the evangelists and apostles of a new dispensation. Slavery in their eyes was a divine institution. It was not only to be the corner-stone of a new edifice; it was to be spread as a blessing from heaven to the uttermost parts of the earth. Nor were the black races alone to be blessed with the beneficent rule of subordination. All who laboured were to be subjected to the same wise restraints and restrictions. Slavery, said Howell Cobb, was the only method of reconciling the conflicting interests of labour and capital. "By making the labourer himself capital the conflict ceased and the rival interests became harmonized." Such were the brazen arguments of the slaveowners. And the triumph of their arms would have meant the re-establishment for years to come of a base and brutal barbarism—nay, the extension of that barbarism to corners of the

globe yet unaffected by its blighting and degrading influence. So I say the question involved in the struggle between North and South was as vital as any that has been fought out since history began.

Doubts on the subject never entered some of our minds—mine among the number. Having written much in defence of the North and against the South in the *National Reformer*, I was invited by a Huddersfield printer to compile a rather elaborate pamphlet on what was then the burning question of the hour. This pamphlet—"The Slaveholders' War: an Argument for the North and the Negro"—proved one thing clearly, that the right to maintain and extend slavery lay at the root of the great conflict. The declarations of Southern leaders and the resolutions of Southern conventions were cited in great numbers to sustain a thesis that nobody disputes now. Two honours befell the production. One was that the author was appointed a vice-president of the Union and Emancipation Society—a society that did more, under the guidance of Thomas Bailey Potter (long the moving spirit of the Cobden Club), than any other organization in the United Kingdom to keep the country from falling into a terrible blunder. The other honour was a translation of the pamphlet into Gujratee, one of the languages of India. So

translated by Jaboolie Roostum at the instance of a Parsee gentleman, the work comprised about fifty pages of curious-looking matter, bearing the imprint of the Duftur Ashkara Press, Bombay. "The publication," the translator wrote to me, "will convince you that India, though distanced from Europe by thousands of miles, is not backward in showing humanity towards a certain race of beings who suffer under the bonds of slavery." And a generous commentator, *àpropos* of the compliment, cited the stanza which a friendly poet had written to the author of "Lalla Rookh":—

> I'm told, dear Moore, your lays are sung
> (Can it be true, you lucky man?)
> By moonlight in the Persian tongue
> Along the streets of Ispahan.

No crisis in which we ourselves were not directly concerned ever excited, I think, the interest in England that the American War did. It entered into all our thoughts, seasoned all our conversation, formed the one topic of discussion at thousands of public meetings. It even invaded our social and scientific congresses. The British Association met in Newcastle in 1863, when the fate of a race, the fate also of the working classes themselves, was still hanging in the balance. Partisans of the South were for the most part partisans of slavery, for the

cause of the South could not be dissociated from the cause of slavery ; and partisans of slavery were invariably embittered against the negro. The fact was demonstrated in the course of some exciting discussions that took place among the members of the Association in the rooms devoted to Ethnology. The leading advocates against the negro were Dr. Hunt and Mr. Carter Blake, both gentlemen of some scientific attainments. It was their contention that the negro was hardly entitled to be called a man at all. Dr. Hunt, I recollect, laid down this astounding proposition—" If you teach the negro to read, he will open his master's letters ; if you teach him to write, he will forge his master's signature." But there was present at the meeting a black gentleman who defended his unfortunate race with singular ability and vigour. This was William Craft, whose escape from bondage with his wife some years before was one of the most romantic adventures in the history of American slavery. Mr. Craft was tall, upright, handsome, full of intelligence, an able speaker, without a trace of those lingual peculiarities which are associated with the Christy Minstrel type of negro. A squabble occurred when Mr. Craft, who delivered a highly interesting address on a visit to the King of Dahomey, was described in the programme as "an African gentleman." Dr. Hunt

and Mr. Carter Blake maintained that he was not a genuine negro, for the reason that one of his ancestors was supposed to have been a white man. The difficulty was surmounted, I believe, by describing Mr. Craft as "an American gentleman," though he himself contended in one of the discussions that he was black enough for anything—black enough for slavery at all events! Those who were present are not likely to have forgotten the impression he produced when, replying to the hostile descriptions that had been given of the negro, he recited the fable of the lion and the traveller: how a traveller and a lion had fallen into a dispute as to which was the stronger of the two—how they came to an inn on the sign of which was a picture of a man slaying a lion—how the traveller pointed to the sign as a proof that he was right—how, finally, the lion exclaimed, "Ah, yes, but who painted the picture?" Mr. Craft's manly eloquence produced so excellent an effect that the defenders of slavery were thoroughly worsted in the encounter.

It was my good fortune to see something of Mr. Craft in private life. A finer gentleman in every respect I think I never met. There was then living in Newcastle a venerable Quaker lady, the wife of Henry Richardson. Mrs. Richardson, who died in 1892 at the advanced age of eighty-six, was one of two

Newcastle Quakeresses who years before had raised the money to purchase the freedom of Frederick Douglass. It was at her house that I became acquainted with William Craft. Among the other guests on the occasion was Elihu Burritt, "the learned blacksmith," then engaged in another walking tour from Land's End to John o' Groat's—a tour, however, which he did not live long enough to put on record in a new volume. Mr. Craft's mission to Dahomey had been, so far as he was himself concerned, a financial failure. To recoup the losses he had sustained in the expedition a committee was formed in Newcastle to assist in raising funds. Of the members of that committee (which included Joseph Cowen, John Mawson, Joseph Clephan, Henry Brady, Joseph Watson, and Thomas Sharp), Dr. Thomas Hodgkin and the writer are the only survivors. Soon after this, I understood, Mr. Craft had undertaken a mission to the Republic of Liberia. And then I lost sight of him. When, in 1900, I made inquiries of the British and Foreign Anti-Savery Society, Mr. Travers Buxton, the secretary, informed me that the latest fact he could find about my African friend was that he was present at a public breakfast which was given to William Lloyd Garrison at St. James's Hall, London, in June, 1867.

CHAPTER XLIII

ENGLAND AND AMERICA

THE attitude of the British nation during the Civil War is persistently (and I sometimes think purposely) misunderstood in the United States. For reasons of their own—often to gain some paltry advantage for their party—politicians endeavour to make out that our people desired and designed the rending of the Republic in twain. Such an interpretation of the state of public feeling in the United Kingdom from 1861 to 1865 is an absolutely false interpretation. Nevertheless, it is probably at the bottom of much of that pernicious folly which is known as "twisting the lion's tail." Some useful purpose may perhaps be served, therefore, if the real condition of affairs be explained here.

This misunderstanding is not altogether unnatural, since the English newspapers, with very few honourable exceptions, preached and pleaded for the Southern rebels. The *Daily News* and the

Morning Star were, I think, the only journals in London that had a good word for the Federal cause till the assassination of President Lincoln showed the venom of the beaten slaveowners. It was much the same in the provinces. Half a dozen of the most prominent among the provincial journals alone took the Northern side. Indeed, I can recall no more than three—the *Newcastle Chronicle*, the *Leeds Mercury*, and the *Manchester Examiner*. All the others appeared to have taken their cue from the *Times*, which in its turn appeared to have taken its cue from Mr. Spence. Seeing that the English newspapers generally were not friendly to the Federal cause, the Northern people not unnaturally thought that the masses of our population entertained the same views. But they were wrong in so thinking.

Nor were the newspapers alone in upbraiding the North and applauding the South. The governing classes, the influential classes, the aristocratic and fashionable classes—in the eyes of all these the Southern chivalry (fancy the chivalry of a race that begot its own slaves!) found favour. There wasn't much to choose between Liberals and Tories at that time and on that question. Save Mr. Disraeli, who spoke kindly of the "territorial democracy" of America, there was hardly a Tory statesman who

did not sneer at the efforts the Northern States were making to subdue their neighbours. Their feelings were perhaps best voiced in the triumphant exclamation of Bulwer Lytton—"The republican bubble has burst!" On the other hand, Mr. Gladstone showed too clearly his mistaken views when he declared in Newcastle that Jefferson Davis had made a nation of the South. The Marquis of Hartington (now the Duke of Devonshire) was young and foolish then, and so brought upon himself one of the most delicate and yet most cutting rebukes on record. When he was introduced to President Lincoln at Washington, he was said to be wearing some kind of Southern favour. The great rail-splitter, taking no notice of the affront, quietly revenged his country: he persistently addressed his visitor as "Mr. Partington."

It is fair to say that Mr. Gladstone, Lord John Russell, and many other Liberals made graceful apologies afterwards for the false positions they had assumed while the conflict was still undecided. Even the *Times* broke its own spears when it came to write of Lincoln's exquisite address at Antietam. Nor did *Punch* at any time acquit itself with better grace or more touching pathos than when it recanted over "murdered Lincoln's bier" all that it once

had foully said. To Tom Taylor, playwright and humorist, was ascribed the credit of the verses which made historic amends:—

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
You who with mocking pencil wont to trace,
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face,

His gaunt gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonnair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please!

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step as though the way were plain;
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,
Of chief's perplexity or people's pain!

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding sheet
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scurril-jester, is there room for *you?*

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil and confute my pen—
To make me own this hind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.

But there were those who did not need to apologise—who never doubted as to the cause of the war and never wavered as to its ultimate result. Foremost among our leading public men to sustain the faith of the one side and enlighten the ignorance of the other were John Bright and William Edward Forster. Mr. Bright never in all his great career better served his country or his kind than he did

then. The speech he made at St. James's Hall, London, where a magnificent meeting was held to express sympathy with the Northern people, remains in my memory as one of the most powerful I had ever heard. Had Mr. Bright been able to visit America at the close of the war, he would have received such a welcome as no native of another country had ever received there.

The churches as well as political parties were found wanting in the crisis—some of the churches. Moses D. Hoge, a doctor of divinity in the Southern States, was sent over to England to preach the new gospel. And this apostle of slavery was actually permitted to expound his diabolical doctrines in English pulpits. Perhaps worse than this happened. *Good Words* was supposed to be a magazine with a conscience. Yet one month it amazed and outraged its readers by sending out, bound up with some of the best literature of the day, the address of the Southern Churches in praise and exaltation of negro bondage. From defending slaveowners, men in politics and men in the Church, driven from point to point, came to defend slavery. Thus were the minds of shallow partisans—shallow in spite of their learning and their prominence—degraded and demoralised by association with an evil cause.

How, then, can it be said, when statesmen and divines, politicians and journalists, friends of privilege and enemies of social and political progress, were aiding and abetting the Southern Confederacy—how can it be said that England stood for freedom and the slave? Yet so it was. The common people, the people who live in cottages, the people who toil in factories and mines, the real people of this great England, were never for a moment beguiled. If others were blinded by passion or prejudice, they at least saw clearly the meaning of the conflict. The national sentiment was declared in the hundreds of public meetings that were held in all parts of the country. Of all these meetings, only one, I think, passed resolutions of sympathy with the South. And this solitary meeting, held in Sheffield, was perverted by the influence which was there and then wielded by a Radical who had recanted his old faith—John Arthur Roebuck. But the exception proved the rule. The genuine mind of England was declared, not in the newspapers or the pulpits, but in the popular gatherings that assembled in every populous district of Britain.

When Henry Ward Beecher came over to enlighten us, he spoke to great audiences in Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh. And it was only in Liverpool that he met with a

mixed reception. I heard him in Edinburgh. It was at the time of the Social Science Congress in 1863. Lord Brougham, like other bewildered politicians, had espoused the cause of the South, and had even insulted the Northern people at the Congress. The meeting which Mr. Beecher addressed was the effective reply. So enormous was the crowd that the orator of the evening had some difficulty in gaining admission. The peculiarities of his pronunciation would on other occasions have made the unthinking laugh ; but the audience was too earnest for hilarity and too united for opposition. So was public opinion manifested in Edinburgh, as it was nearly everywhere else, for the North.

More impressive even than the evidence of great meetings was the spirit of the starving people of Lancashire. Subtle and crafty appeals were made to their feelings. "Break the blockade," they were told, "and cotton will be abundant again. Then will the mills reopen, and your terrible privations cease." The insidious advice fell on deaf ears. The factory workers, to their everlasting honour, declined to terminate their own sufferings at the cost of the slavery of another race. Rather than help the slaveowners to rivet anew the gyves of the negro, they would perish of starvation. It was this heroic

attitude, better than the diatribes of journalists or the plausible pronunciations of statesmen, that indicated the real sentiment of the nation. When somebody at Sheffield ventured to advise that the Government should break the blockade, a voice came from the crowd, "There will be civil war in England first." That voice spoke for the masses. I say again, then, that the heart of the country, the heart of the common people of the country, was as sound for right and freedom as that of New England itself. Emerson's "Boston Hymn" found a response in every workman's breast—

> Pay ransom to the owner,
> And fill the bag to the brim!
> But who is owner? The slave is owner,
> And ever was. *Pay him!*

Ireland, however, stood on neutral ground. There were patriot sons of hers on both sides, as there generally are when a fight is to the fore. An amusing instance of Irish impartiality occurred in the very middle of the conflict. Terence Bellew McManus, a rebel of '48, having died in America, his body was brought home for interment. One of the orators over the grave told how Irishmen were comporting themselves across the Atlantic. They were, he said, gallantly upholding the reputation of the "ould counthrie." (Cheers.) Thomas Francis Meagher, "Meagher of the Sword," was bravely

fighting for the North. (More cheers.) And the sons of John Mitchel were, with equal valour, fighting for the South. (Renewed cheers.) So did the Irish people, both at home and in America, manifest their neutrality. The help they gave to the Federals was counterbalanced by the help they gave to the Confederates. Meagher, however, rose to the rank of Brigadier-General in the service of the Republic.

Wrong as to the cause of the war, partisans of the South got wrong also as to the progress of the war. It was not, indeed, till Richmond fell that many of them could be persuaded that the end was approaching. No maps were published in the newspapers then; nor did we get news from the seat of war till the Atlantic liners brought it. The consequence was that the public mind in this country was often mystified, especially as a battle was rarely announced without a claim being set up for a Confederate victory. Not being able to trace the positions of the rival armies in the different engagements, people here failed to see that the Northern commanders were steadily driving the Southerners backward—closing in upon them in every direction. And so it happened that the final catastrophe came as a great surprise to our countrymen. If others had followed the plan I adopted,

they would have understood better the progress of military operations. My plan, commonly pursued since, was simplicity itself. I pasted a good map of the United States on a drawing board; I provided myself with two packets of pins—black pins for the Confederates, and white pins for the Federals; and after the arrival of every fresh mail I altered the positions of the armies (or rather the pins representing the armies) according to the news received. Thus it could be seen that the unhappy South was being gradually strangled by the stronger North. And hereby hangs another tale. One morning, after reading the despatches in the newspapers, I went to my map to make the necessary alterations. Jupiter! what had happened? I was amazed to find both armies scattered in all directions —Federals in Canada and Mexico, Confederates floundering in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans! It was the industrious maid-servant of the establishment who had swept with her duster all the belligerents off the field, replacing them later in the locations she thought they ought to occupy. The incident, vexatious at first, was intensely amusing afterwards; but it took me a long time, with much consultation of back despatches, to put Grant and Sherman, Lee and Bragg, in their proper encampments again.

The war was bloody and frightful. At no less

cost and in no other way, however, could the curse of slavery have been wiped out. The American people never rose higher than they did during those terrible four years. And their armies, like the armies of Cromwell, dispersed without danger to the country. It is no small honour to England that her working people, faithful to the cause of freedom, helped by their efforts and their sufferings to emancipate four million of slaves.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE LAST INSURRECTION IN POLAND

NOBODY knows what real misery is who has not been out of work in London—out of work and out of resources too. The most depressing and forlorn period of my life was passed under these circumstances. It extended from the spring of 1862 to the spring of 1863. The transfer of the *Alliance News* to another office threw me out of employment. Other work not being obtainable in Manchester, we broke up our home, sold or gave away most of our belongings, and returned to unfurnished apartments in Kennington. Our family was small at the time; still it was large enough to cause great anxiety. Work was almost as scarce in London as it was in Manchester. At any rate I could get nothing regular—only a day or two here and there. A god-send was the commission (never wholly paid, though) for compiling the American pamphlet. Soon our little savings began to dwindle, and bread had to be bought and rent had to be

paid. I can tell you that the honest man without work and without means in London must be light of heart indeed if he can resist thoughts that need not be named. It was when I was thus suffering that I learnt how good and genuine a friend I had in Charles Bradlaugh.

As it seemed to me to be increasingly difficult to obtain steady employment in the printing trade, I came to consider that I was, perhaps, not destitute of some of the qualifications of a journalist. Indeed, people who had to do with newspapers had made inquiries of Mr. Bradlaugh about the writer of the articles signed Caractacus. Also Mr. Bradlaugh himself had made inquiries of newspaper people on behalf of the said writer. So that I might take instant advantage of anything that should turn up, I accepted, as before stated, an invitation to breakfast with him every morning. This I did for many weeks. One of the gentlemen who had made inquiries about Caractacus was Mr. Joseph Cowen of Newcastle—then Mr. Joseph Cowen, Jun.—well known to all Radicals in England and all Revolutionists on the Continent. Mr. Cowen had lately acquired the *Newcastle Chronicle*, and was contemplating certain developments of the property. Would Caractacus be disposed to accept an engagement in Newcastle when the time came? Of course he

would. Meantime, would Caractacus write a political article once a week for the *Newcastle Chronicle* similar to that which he had contributed for a few years past to the *National Reformer?* Again of course he would. The articles appeared over the signature of Ironside—the beginning of a series which at a later date ran into hundreds in the *Weekly Chronicle.* Henry Dunckley's "Letters of Verax" had a great vogue in the *Manchester Examiner* at the time, and a Lancashire member of Parliament had the goodness to say that the "Letters of Ironside" were at least equally valuable. For the pride and vanity involved in the mention of so uninteresting a statement I hope (though I may not deserve) to be forgiven.

But before the earlier of these transactions had come to pass a much more interesting event had occurred. The last insurrection—the insurrection of Maryon Langiewicz—broke out in Poland. That unhappy nation, whose history is the saddest in the world, had been crushed, trodden under foot, and divided as spoils among three of the leading vultures of Europe—Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Posen had been harshly treated by Prussia; Galicia, after a time of brutal treatment by Metternich, Szela, and Radetzki, had been utterly subdued by Austria; but Lithuania, which had fallen to the share of

Russia, was now and again goaded into desperation by the odious policy and despotism of the Muscovites. Poor Poland! It may be that she owed her downfall to her own internal dissensions—mainly, perhaps, to that fatal "liberum veto" which made an absolutely unanimous vote of the nobles necessary to the authorisation of any change in the law. But, these dissensions notwithstanding, she had once, under the walls of Vienna, saved Europe from a flood of Saracen barbarism. But no service in the past, and no prospects of service in the future, availed against the avarice of her neighbours. Poland was divided and conquered. The patriotic life, however, was not even yet extinct. There were periodical risings in Warsaw, in Wilna, in the provinces—risings in which the peasants, armed with scythes and reaping hooks, fought with desperate valour against disciplined hordes of Tartars and Cossacks. The last of these risings occurred in 1862. Hope was renewed by the daring exploits of Langiewicz and his heroic followers.

Friends of Poland, who were friends also of freedom everywhere else in the world, organized a movement to aid the insurgents. A committee was formed in London, with smaller committees in provincial towns, to raise funds for the Poles, and afford such other aid as could be rendered them.

The committee consisted for the most part of men who were always foremost to help any enterprise that promised liberation for the oppressed. Thus Peter Alfred Taylor was treasurer, while other members included Joseph Cowen, William Shaen, Arthur Trevelyan, R. B. Litchfield, J. Sale Barker, Dr. Epps, Serjeant Parry, and Professor F. W. Newman. Among the rest were Lord Teynham, Sir John Bowring, John Stuart Mill, George Moore, J. J. Colman, the Rev. Goodwyn Barmby, and William Charles Macready, the famous tragedian. The Central Committee of the Friends of Poland, which acted "with the authority of the Delegate from the Polish National Government," was in want of a secretary to keep its records and conduct its correspondence. I was appointed to the office. It did not seem to me that I was an ideal or even an efficient secretary, though I suppose I did all that was necessary. But there was at least one qualification that I did not lack—zeal for the cause. The duties of the office were discharged with what ability I could command till in the early part of 1863 I received an urgent summons to Newcastle.

The offices of the committee were situated in Southampton Street, Strand. There I attended every day to answer letters, issue appeals, receive subscriptions, give information to visitors, and arrange such other

matters of business as required attention. The work was not arduous, but it was eminently congenial. Our visitors, though not numerous, were many of them interesting. One was a gentleman, Mr. Bullock Hall, who wanted an introduction to the Polish leaders to serve as war correspondent for an English newspaper. Another was commissioned by Mr. James Anthony Froude, the editor of *Fraser's Magazine*, to seek information for an article on Poland. Mr. Grant Duff, not then honoured with a title, but of much repute as a politician on account of the elaborate addresses he used to deliver to his constituents at Elgin, had been invited to join the committee. There was much that was fastidious about the hon. gentleman. And so he came to give a good many excellent reasons why he could not comply with the request. But one morning there arrived a visitor who struck me as being more earnest than any of the rest. I knew him by sight and name, for I had seen and heard him in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, pleading eloquently for the slaves in America. Did we want a speech for Poland? If so, he was ready to comply. Slightly deformed—almost like a hunchback, in fact—he was a striking figure as he planted himself before the fire and carelessly put the question and made the offer. It was Washington

Wilks, author of a "History of the Last Half-Century," who had not long before been summoned to the Bar of the House of Commons for some breach of privilege committed in a Carlisle journal. Opportunity for the speech was soon afterwards afforded by a great meeting in St. James's Hall, which Mr. George Potter, the editor of the *Beehive*, acting on behalf of the committee, organized for the purpose of expressing and eliciting sympathy with Poland.

The funds raised by the committee were handed over to Mr. Joseph Cwierczakiewicz, the Delegate of the National Government. One evening I went with the Delegate to his lodgings near the Haymarket. The room was full of Polish ladies, wives and daughters of exiles, who were busily making flags for the insurgents. How many of these flags reached Poland I know not; but such as did became the spoils of the barbarian hordes of Russia. The unequal struggle continued all through 1863. The insurrection, which had broken out in January, was not finally crushed till February of the following year, and not then till it was computed that 40,000 of the flower of the Polish population had perished on the battlefield. The threat of Gortschakoff had been accomplished—Poland had been converted into "a wilderness of ashes and corpses," and Mouravieff

held a feast of horrors at Wilna, slaying men, scourging women, sparing neither age nor sex in his ruthless wrath. Langiewicz escaped into Galicia, was there imprisoned by the Austrians, and two years later joined the great army of refugees in London, dying in Turkey in 1887. As for Poland, "every handful of her soil a relic of martyrs," she remains (and, alas! seems likely to remain) the very Niobe of Nations.

The fatal struggle over, the English people were asked to assist in binding up the wounds. Dr. Barraniecki, who had organized the National Government, succeeded subsequently in collecting and bringing to England a great quantity of jewellery and objects of art—here to be sold for the benefit of sick and wounded Poles. The rich lady sent her necklet of brilliants, the poor widow her wedding ring, the young girl her love token, and the nun her coral beads. These pathetic contributions in relief of national suffering, disposed of at bazaars in London and Newcastle, realised a handsome sum. The sale was principally managed in Newcastle by two ladies—Mrs. Biggar, wife of the Mayor of Gateshead, and Mrs. George William Hodge, wife of the Sheriff of Newcastle. It was the last service English people were asked to render to Poland.

An echo of the insurrection of 1863 came to

Newcastle fifteen years later. General Langiewicz, as was said at the time of the struggle, was "accompanied and assisted by a Polish heroine of equal beauty and courage." This lady was the subject of a lying paragraph that appeared in a German newspaper in 1878. "Mademoiselle Pustawaitow, who had served as aide-de-camp to the Polish general, and was by his side on the retreat from his latest field, has," the German scribe declared, "fallen considerably in the world since that time, and has been an inmate of various prisons in Silesia. Truly a melancholy ending to a career that began with so much romance about it." This paragraph somehow found its way into the columns of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*. Then came an indignant protest from France. Writing from Dijon on Dec. 10th, 1878, R. J. Jaworowski, evidently a compatriot of the lady's, informed the editor that Mademoiselle Pustawaitow had ever since the revolution of 1863 been residing in Paris, happily married to a medical gentleman, Dr. Loewenhard, of the Rue Mont Parnasse. The heroine of the last insurrection in Poland was thereafter left in peace to perform her duties as wife and mother.

CHAPTER XLV

"THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT"

WHEN the secretaryship of the Polish Committee became vacant, Mr. Bradlaugh, who was cognisant of my removal to Newcastle, suggested that I should recommend as my successor a young friend of his who lived in his house, and whom I used a few months before to meet every morning at his breakfast table. The recommendation was effective. Mr. Bradlaugh's friend was appointed to the office. I informed him of the duties, handed over all the books and correspondence (including many interesting letters from famous people of the day), and took my leave of London, calling on the way to the North at Manchester and other places for the purpose of consulting with supporters of the Polish cause. A few weeks later I received a letter from Mr. P. A. Taylor, the treasurer of the committee. Could I tell him where my successor was to be found? The new secretary had not been to the office for several days, had

left everything in confusion, and had given no indication of his whereabouts. I could only refer Mr. Taylor to Mr. Bradlaugh. It transpired afterwards that the neglect of duty was due to a fatal and incurable weakness. The young man who had so failed in the work he had undertaken to do was the author of "The City of Dreadful Night."

James Thomson, then and for long afterwards a member of Mr. Bradlaugh's family, was a man of gloomy aspect, manners, and ideas. Even his smile was sad. It seemed as if he was suffering from an irrepressible sorrow. Life to him was not a mission, but a mistake. Pessimism, a dismal hopelessness, was written on his countenance, which did not otherwise bear evidence of special aptitude or ability. We were of course on friendly terms, and talked cordially and pleasantly together when we happened to meet. Beyond this there was no intimacy. It is possible I should not have understood him if there had been. I rather fancy that his cynicism was not to my liking, as I know it was not to the liking of some other of his acquaintances. But I had not at this time any knowledge of that dreadful failing which was eventually the cause of his death. Once only can I recall a lively passage in his mood and conduct. A social gathering was being held at

the Hall of Science, then one of the centres of the Freethought movement. It was followed by a dance. Thomson, I remember, entered with what seemed to me quite unusual spirit into the amusement. There may have been other occasions when he showed equal sprightliness, but I never saw them. Mr. Bradlaugh not only found him a home, but, when opportunity offered, employment also. Paid contributions of his over the initials of B. V., most of them of a more or less pessimistic character, appeared in the *National Reformer*. And when at a later period Mr. Bradlaugh had embarked in the commercial business connected with Italian sand, I found the poet installed as chief clerk in his London office.

Thomson's intimacy with Bradlaugh was begun in Ireland. Bradlaugh was then a recruit in a regiment of dragoons, and Thomson was a teacher in the garrison school. Of this early connection particulars were given in the *National Reformer* at the time that one of the poet's biographies was published :— "We first knew James Thomson in Ballincollig Barracks, Ireland, in 1851, and for many years we were very intimate. He was a pupil teacher in the garrison school, when we, in the night from nine to eleven or eleven to one, walked 'sentry go' together, he leaving his bed, in defiance of regula-

tions, to make our walk less lonely. When he left Ballincollig for Chelsea, and then for Jersey, we wrote old-fashioned letters, six, eight, and ten pages, to each other. His were charming letters. When, after some ten years, trouble came to him, the writer's home was his, and, with a few severe strainings, the result of one inherited weakness, a close friendship lasted until 1870, and was finally severed in 1874."

While in Jersey, Thomson became acquainted with another old friend, George Julian Harney. Thomson was the garrison schoolmaster, and Harney was editing the *Jersey Independent*. "The garrison schoolmaster," wrote Harney in 1892, "was a quiet, amiable, somewhat melancholy gentleman. I had the pleasure of lending him Carlyle's 'Sartor Resartus' and a few other books. Presently he much more than repaid my small courtesies by sending a few translations of Heine's shorter poems to the *Independent*." The incident was only brought to mind many years later when Harney, then in America, read the translations from Heine in a volume of the poet's verses he had received from England.

Thomson's genius came to be generally recognised only after his melancholy death in 1882, at the age of forty-seven, eight years after the final severance of the Bradlaugh ties. These years must have been

years of misery, for Thomson had then lost the restraining influence of the one great friendship of his life. It is a question for psychologists how far the earlier recognition of his genius would have saved him from the wreck he made of himself. The chances are that nothing could have saved him. One of the first to pay tribute to his poetic merit—the first in literary circles, says the *Athenæum*—was William Michael Rossetti, who for more than a year (from Feb. 1872, to Nov. 1873) was in correspondence with Thomson on the subject of Shelley and other matters. Mr. Rossetti's appreciation, however, could not help the poet to a publisher. And so it happened that the "City of Dreadful Night," the most famous of Thomson's poems, appeared first in instalments in the *National Reformer*, where I recollect many readers thought that it seemed considerably out of place. "Though we do not vaunt our judgment of poetry," wrote Mr. Bradlaugh in 1884, "we gave the best evidence of our personal estimate of Thomson's muse by finding place for its insertion here at a date when no other source of publicity availed, save once in *Fraser's Magazine*, which, however, did not pay its poet." The poem appeared in the early part of 1874, though it was not till years afterwards that it attracted any sort of general attention. George

Eliot, however, praised it, as did Dante Rossetti and Algernon Swinburne. But when the author died many biographies were written of him; every scrap that he had ever composed, whether of prose or poetry, was gathered up and printed; and critics and admirers declared that no living poet, except Browning, could be considered his superior. Poor Thomson was not the only bard who was neglected when he lived and adored when he was dead. No fate is more pitiable than that of the victim of incurable intemperance. Thomson's sufferings during his alternate fits of abandonment and remorse must have been terrible. "The demon of hypochondriasis and all kindred and attendant demons," it was said, "seized him and tore and crushed him in the darkness of his insane phantasy."

It was almost natural that a love legend should be invented to account for the poet's pessimism and frequent lapses. One of his biographers expressly states, indeed, that he "lost in his youth the beautiful girl to whom he was engaged" This, however, was pure fiction. Mr. Bradlaugh, who knew the facts, explained them thus:—"The armourer-sergeant's daughter (of the 7th Dragoon Guards), who died in Ireland in 1852, was only a little child; and it was not till long after her death, and in his morbid times, that Thomson, little by

little, built the poetical romance about her memory." The "one inherited weakness" about which Mr. Bradlaugh wrote in the same article was the cause of his undoing. Mr. Bertram Dobell, who issued Thomson's works in four volumes, speaks of the poet's father as having "fallen in the social scale, owing to habits of intemperance"—which habits, according to vague report, brought on imbecility. And Thomson himself told another of his biographers that "intemperance ran in his family," and that "nearly all the members of it who 'had brains,' especially a gifted aunt of his, fell victims to its power." It was disease, then, and not love, that led to the poet's downfall.

The manner of Thomson's death was awful. Mr. William Sharp tells the sad story in his account of Philip Bourke Marston, prefixed to a collection of Marston's poems in Walter Scott's "Canterbury Poets." The catastrophe came nearly twenty years after Thomson had misbehaved himself in connection with the Polish Committee. Marston, who also had had a melancholy career, was one of his friends at that period. Thomson, who had now included among his excesses the frequent use of opium, had returned from a prolonged visit to the country, "where all had been well with him." Then for a few weeks his record was almost a blank.

Where he had hidden himself, and under what conditions, we can only imagine. Afterwards he so far conquered his control as to be able to visit his friend. Thomson found Marston alone. "I arrived," writes Mr. Sharp, "late in the afternoon, and found Marston in a state of nervous perturbation. Thomson was lying down on the bed in the adjoining room. Stooping, I caught his whispered words to the effect that he was dying: upon which I lit a match, and in the sudden glare beheld his white face on a blood-stained pillow. He had burst one or more blood-vessels, and the hæmorrhage was dreadful. Some time had to elapse before anything could be done; but ultimately, with the help of a friend who came in opportunely, poor Thomson was carried downstairs, placed in a cab, and driven to the University Hospital." He died the next day, a few hours after Sharp and Marston had called to see him in the hospital ward. It was a tragic ending to a most unhappy life.

CHAPTER XLVI

NEWCASTLE IN THE SIXTIES

NEWCASTLE is an ancient town—"aalwis wes an ancient toon, my lord," as one of her old worthies is credited with having said. But she was more ancient in the sixties than she is now. The paradox is capable of explanation. Many of her ancient edifices have since been swept away by the tide of improvement. The Side and the Sandhill were pictures then. To-day they are only half-pictures. Grand old houses, every line and curve a line and curve of beauty, that dated back almost to the "specious times of great Elizabeth," have been replaced by modern buildings—more commodious and durable, no doubt, but infinitely less picturesque and interesting. This is why I say Newcastle is less ancient now (of course I mean in appearance) than she was when I first had the pleasure of admiring her stately streets.

Grainger and Dobson had completed their grand

work of constructing the new town of Newcastle some time before 1863. The tide of population, however, had not yet risen to the height the great builder had anticipated. Clayton Street for the most part was a line of empty shops, showing that the town for the moment had been overbuilt. The Central Exchange, again, had failed to lure the merchants from the Quayside. On the other hand, the severe harmony of the architecture of Grey Street—one of the finest streets in the world—had not been broken by tawdry and incongruous defacements. Nor had Market Street or Shakspeare Street suffered similar mutilations. But Grainger Street, which then ended at the Bigg Market, had been disfigured by painted images and ugly wooden balconies, followed in later years by gigantic and grotesque letters of vulgar gilt. The new Town Hall—so called then, though it is a dreadfully disreputable old Town Hall now—had just been built, while some of the houses of Union Street, now covered by the northern end of the municipal abortion, still stood between Pudding Chare and the High Bridge. There was no Swing Bridge across the Tyne, nor yet any Redheugh Bridge; neither was there any Byker Bridge over the Ouseburn, or any Armstrong Bridge over Jesmond Dene. The place of the Swing Bridge was occupied by

a stone structure of many arches. And near at hand stood the old Mansion House in the Close, dignified even in decay. The river front of the Moot Hall had not been spoiled to make a more convenient assize court; but under the very roof of the older Guild Hall fishwives chattered and chaffered and swore. Two of the ancient towers that once helped to guard the lives and property of the lieges still stood in the sixties—Gunner Tower opposite the Central Station, and the Weaver's Tower on the site of the Public Library.

Changes in the centre of Newcastle have been considerable, but not nearly so considerable as those in the outskirts, during the period that I have been acquainted with the district. Forty years ago Maple Street was the limit of the town in one direction, Victoria Square in another, Graingerville in a third, the Ouseburn in a fourth. Beyond Maple Street there were few houses except along Scotswood Road, where the great Elswick Works were just beginning to be famous. Away up the hill were open fields to Elswick Hall. Elswick Lane, bordered by lovely trees which any decent Town Council would have fought tooth and nail to preserve, provided a delightful walk to Benwell, with exquisite views over the Tyne up the Valley of the Derwent. From Benwell itself there was so sweet a prospect that

John Martin is said to have got his idea of the Plains of Heaven from it. Further up the hill other glorious views were at everybody's command from the West Turnpike, for bright and cheerful hedgerows had not then been supplanted by ugly and repellent brick walls. Between Gloucester House (otherwise Cabbage Hall) and the Benwell Reservoir there was nothing but the Workhouse and one or two mansions. Alongside the workhouse grounds a pretty lane gave access to the Nun's Moor. Beyond Jesmond Church, then called St. Spite's, there were pretty pathways to the Apple Tree Gardens, while beyond Brandling Village there were private roads and lanes through the Friday Fields to Matthew Bank. Portland Park was a cabbage garden; but the two cemeteries already faced each other, and Martha Major still flourished at the Minories. Lambert's Leap was much as it was when the incident which gave it its name occurred. Past the bridge the Tippytoe Bank led down a beautiful ravine to the Washing Tubs and the Ouseburn. Pandon Dene still retained traces of the loveliness that had inspired a previous generation of local poets. Over the Ouseburn, Heaton was all fields and farmsteads, while Byker was little more than a row of old-fashioned cottages on each side of Shields Road. From this brief survey anybody

may see how rapidly the "canny toon" has grown since the year 1863.

Thomas Hedley was then Mayor of Newcastle; John Clayton was Town Clerk; James Hodgson was chairman of the Finance Committee; Thomas Bryson (who was killed with John Mawson and a number of policemen and others in the Town Moor explosion) was Town Surveyor; John Sabbage was Chief Constable; Ralph Dodds, Ralph Park Philipson, Isaac Lowthian Bell, William Lockey Harle, Charles Frederick Hamond, Dr. William Newton, Joseph Cowen, and Joseph Cowen, Jun., were members of the Town Council. All the members of the Council and all the officials of the Corporation at the period named are now dead, save only Sir Isaac Lowthian Bell and Sir Charles Frederick Hamond. The former long ago severed his connection with the town, but the latter still takes an active interest in municipal proceedings. Among the other notable natives and residents at the time were Sir John Fife, Dr. Headlam, Thomas Doubleday, and William Bell Scott. Fife was a distinguished surgeon and Headlam a distinguished physician, while Doubleday had distinguished himself in literature, and Scott, then master of the School of Design, afterwards won repute in art and poetry.

Newcastle could not boast of a single public park in 1863. Jesmond Dene, then recently acquired by Sir William George Armstrong (afterwards famous as Lord Armstrong), was a private pleasaunce, looking from the outside, with its red walks and comparatively bare banks, new and raw and barren. Mr. Hamond (now Sir Charles Frederick Hamond) must, I think, be credited with the first attempt at park-making. Part of the Leazes was enclosed; but the difficulty experienced in retaining the water for the lake (there was an old spring well in the enclosure) gave rise for a long time to much satiric banter about Charlie's Hole. When Christian Allhusen proposed to sell the grounds of Elswick Hall for building sites, an agitation arose for the purchase of the property as a public park. The scheme was at first defeated in the Town Council, owing to the absurd jealousy of the East End members; building operations were actually begun; but a committee of half a dozen enlightened gentlemen —Joseph Cowen, Thomas Gray, Thomas Forster, William Smith, Thomas Hodgkin, and William Haswell Stephenson—acquired the estate for the purpose of holding it till the Council could be persuaded to change its mind, which it ultimately did. The circumstance that led to this happy conclusion was the chance of acquiring, through the

generosity of Sir William Armstrong, part of the Heaton Hall estate as a park for the East End. To Heaton Park the same generous donor afterwards added the Armstrong section, and ultimately Jesmond Dene itself. While these facilities for the public pleasure and enjoyment were being provided, measures were taken to do something of a like kind for the northern end of the town. The strip of the Town Moor that lay between Brandling Village and the North Road was a sort of Tom Tiddler's ground in the sixties—partly swamp and wholly neglected. Enclosed and planted, it is now the Brandling Park. On the other side of the North Road was the old Bull Park. The Bull Park and a few acres of the Town Moor adjoining, including the reservoir that once supplied the inhabitants with water, were utilised in 1887 for an exhibition to commemorate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. When the exhibition was dispersed, the site was converted into a recreation ground. Some time later another recreation ground was constructed out of a section of the Nun's Moor. And so it has come to pass that the citizens of Newcastle in the course of thirty or forty years have acquired no fewer than eight capacious parks and pleasure places. Further, as the indirect outcome of a movement in favour of tree-planting suggested by Robin Goodfellow in the

Newcastle Weekly Chronicle, the Town Moor itself has been completely surrounded by belts of thriving plantations.

Forty years ago Newcastle as regards many things might have been described as a one-horse town. The Post Office was located in incommodious premises in the Arcade, with no telegraphs, no telephones, and no parcels delivery as parts of its appurtenances and functions. The public conveyances were of the most primitive character. A couple of ramshackle omnibuses ran from Bentinck across the High Level Bridge to Bensham ; and a ponderous vehicle plied between the town and Gosforth (then called Bulman Village). Bicycles were unknown : so were electric lights, electric cars, and electric motors. Even tramways did not come till many years later. A few chop-houses and eating-houses supplied the wants of the people who needed substantial refreshments. A noted black man had established a chop-house in Grey Street ; the brothers McCree (another brother, the Rev. George W. McCree, was an active missionary and social reformer in London) announced that their customers "fared sumptuously every day" in the Arcade ; and a few humble caterers in the Market and the Bigg Market offered roast and boiled to carriers and country traders. This was about all

there was then in the way of public accommodation for the hungry. The grills and restaurants and dining-rooms that now flourish in the town are every one of modern growth.

Board schools there were none; but their places were partially supplied by private adventure academies, while the splendid schools which were afterwards established by Dr. Rutherford in Bath Lane served to educate almost half Newcastle. Rutherford College, the Medical College, the College of Science, High Schools for Boys and Girls—these came along subsequent to the sixties. The Grammar School, under Dr. Snape, was situated in Charlotte Square, pending the completion of the new building in Rye Hill. Bruce's School had not begun to decay, and Erlich's School was almost in its infancy. And then there were such other educational establishments as the Jubilee Schools, the Clergy Jubilee Schools, St. Andrew's Schools, the Orphan House Schools, and Dame Allan's Schools. Many of these institutions were supported or controlled by the Church or the Denominations. The Church in the sixties was under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Durham, the Bishopric of Newcastle not being formed till some years later. Clement Moody was vicar of Newcastle, Rowland East vicar of St. Andrew's, Berkeley Addison vicar of Jesmond,

Walter Irvine vicar of All Saints, H. W. Wright vicar of St. John's, George Heriot vicar of St. Ann's, Charles Raines vicar of St. Peter's, and Robt. Anchor Thompson master of St. Mary's, Rye Hill. Mr. Thompson had come with a great reputation, but never did anything particular except quarrel with his bell-ringer and the brethren of the hospital. Mr. Wright was known as Fanny, and Mr. Irvine as Mary Ann, while Mr. Heriot was the father of two or three handsome daughters, one of whom made an unhappy marriage with Lord Wentworth, son of Byron's Ada. Many queer or amusing stories were told of Mr. Raines. One was that he was in the habit of prowling around the stable yards of the neighbourhood in search of rats for his terrier to worry. But the best was about a game of pool that he was playing with some friends. As he put down the threepenny pieces when his ball was pocketed, one of the players asked if he was using the collections. "Ah," replied the reverend gentleman, "I perceive that you recognise your paltry contributions!" The Dissenting ministers of the day, at least some of them, were more earnest than the clergy. The most prominent was Dr. Rutherford, and next to him in prominence and popularity were J. C. Street, H. T. Robjohns, George Stewart, Richard Leitch,

J. G. Potter, and Alexander Reid (father of Sir T. Wemyss Reid). Dr. Hogarth was the Catholic Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle; Monsignor Eyre (afterwards Archbishop of Glasgow) was rector of St. Mary's Cathedral; and Father Aylward was the principal priest at St. Andrew's Chapel, which was down a court off Pilgrim Street, and stood on the site of what is now Worswick Street.

The fame of no town in England for political alertness and advancement was spread further abroad in the sixties than that of Newcastle. It had been the home of the Northern Political Union, when Charles Attwood, Charles Larkin, Thomas Doubleday, and John Fife thundered against the Tories; and it was then the home of another movement, the Northern Reform League, the leading spirit and spokesmen of which were Joseph Cowen, Jun., R. B. Reed, William Cook, Thomas Gregson, and J. T. Gilmour. The town at that time was almost invariably the first to make its voice heard when any question of moment, especially any foreign question, demanded the public attention. The members of Parliament were Thomas Emerson Headlam and Somerset Archibald Beaumont. Dissatisfaction arose with Mr. Beaumont in 1865 by reason of his attitude towards Parliamentary Reform. The consequence was an immense requisition to

Mr. Joseph Cowen (afterwards Sir Joseph Cowen) to contest the constituency in the Radical interest. Mr. Cowen was returned at the head of the poll, and Mr. Beaumont, who was defeated, quitted politics and the country. Newcastle remained Radical or Whig and Radical till the Radicals became intolerant, imperious, arrogant. Mr. Cowen, Jun., as the result of much pressure, had succeeded his father. The new member, as he told his constituents on one memorable occasion, was willing to wear the party uniform, but declined to wear the party plush. And so the Radicals, failing to understand the independence or appreciate the services of Mr. Cowen, prepared themselves the way for the triumphs of a Tory candidate. Since that time Newcastle has fallen from her high estate in the world of politics.

CHAPTER XLVII

PASTIMES IN THE SIXTIES

IF one were in want of a phrase to qualify the beginning of this century, I do not know that a better could be invented than the "age of amusement." The contrast in this respect between the present time and the period of the sixties is immense. Most of the pastimes that are now held in greatest favour were absolutely unknown to the general populace forty years ago. Fancy a world in which there was no football, no tennis, no hockey, no golf, no croquet, no cycling! Yet such was the benighted condition of England at the time of my first acquaintance with Newcastle. Winter especially was a sombre season, for then there was really no outdoor pastime for poor people at all except in frosty weather. All the amusements and recreations just enumerated are the growth and invention of less than half a century. It is still true that life is not all beer and skittles; but it is much more beer

and skittles now than it was when our old men were in their prime. Yet pastimes, though less varied than those of the present day, were not uncommon in the sixties.

One of the best, which still holds its own as a summer exercise, was cricket. The old cricket field at the end of what was then called Bath Road, now covered with churches, colleges, and drill halls, was both spacious in extent and convenient of access. Many a brilliant match, in which Northumbrians did not fail to distinguish themselves, was played and witnessed in the old enclosure. Unfortunately, interest in what is yet one of the finest of British pastimes went largely out when facilities for pursuing it were lost. For elderly people, fathers of the city many of them, suitable exercise and recreation were provided at the old Bowling Green in Bath Lane. The game of bowls, one of the most ancient of English pastimes, had been played in Newcastle from time immemorial. According to tradition, Charles the First, when a prisoner in Anderson Place, played at bowls with his courtiers and attendants in the Shieldfield, though recent investigations have shown that the game at which he played there was golf. More authentic is the statement that bowls were a favourite pastime on the Forth, the old playground of the people that was swept away

to make room for the Central Station. Then came new greens—first behind Northumberland Street, and then behind the old walls of the town in Bath Lane. Before the latter was compelled to give place to Rutherford College, other bowling greens had been made—in Portland Park, in West Parade, in the public pleasure grounds. A game with a similar name, but totally different in character, was much in vogue among pitmen in the sixties. It was called bowling, but it should more properly have been called throwing or pitching, for the balls of earthenware were thrown or pitched, and not bowled at all. The Town Moor was the chief scene of this recreation. People who wanted to hear blasphemy in the richest burr of Northumberland had only to attend a bowling match. If, besides, they wanted to incur the risk of annihilation, they had nothing better to do during a champion match than to touch a ball or allow a ball to touch them in its flight. When complaints were made of the danger to the ordinary frequenters of the Moor, a special bowling track was laid out for the purposes of the pastime. Trippet and quoit, elsewhere called knurr and spell, which has since gone entirely out of fashion, was also practised on the Town Moor at the period in question.

Wrestling was much in favour, too, in the sixties.

The wrestlers had a ground of their own near the Shot Tower. There two or three days' sport was provided every Easter, when the prizes were sufficiently numerous and valuable to induce athletes from Cumberland and Westmorland to join in the competition. Sleet and snow, however, were so often the accompaniments of Easter weather that the tournament was postponed to Whitsuntide. When bad weather pursued the pastime even to Whitsuntide, its patrons and supporters deemed it desirable, not to say necessary, to abandon the tournament altogether. But the sport that commanded the greatest amount of attention on Tyneside forty years ago was boat-rowing. Harry Clasper was still to the fore, and Robert Chambers was then in his prime. Chambers was a man who was sometimes incapable of winning a race, but always incapable of selling one. For this reason the people never lost faith in the simple, honest oarsman. There were others, however, in whom the same confidence was not felt. When a great race was to be rowed, the banks of the Tyne from the High Level to Scotswood Suspension Bridge were crowded with spectators. Indeed, the factories along the route were all laid idle till the contest was over. The popularity of the sport continued till the district ceased to produce great rowers. I think the age

of sterility in this respect set in after Renforth's tragic death in Canada.

As long as Newcastle Races were held on the Town Moor, they constituted a great popular festival. Many thousands of people went to them, not for the purpose of speculating on the winners, but for the purpose of seeing the spectacle and sharing in the excitement of the crowd. But when the races were removed to Gosforth, and became part and parcel of a business transaction, this class of patrons ceased to attend them. My own earliest visits to the races were made when Caller-Ou and Brown Bread were reckoned among the favourites, together with a horse with a Crimean name, Bakhtchisarai, which the populace converted into Back-stitch Sarah or Back-kitchen Sarah. The side-shows and the drinking tents were at least as attractive as the races themselves. A pitman from Durham was asked about the events he had seen run. "Wey," said he, "aa got inte Jerry Jordan's booth, and seed nowt mair." Among the living curiosities exhibited in those days was a fat woman. The lady's husband stood at the door of the tent and bawled invitations to the crowd to "come and see the famous Nanny Clark frae Hooden." This husband himself was the son of a notorious character —"Jack the Deevil"—so called because, when he

acquired a small public-house, he astonished and horrified the folks o' Shields by exhibiting his own coffin in the bar.

And then there was Micky Bent with his sparring booth, the "Pavilion of the Fancy." It was a treat to listen to Micky, as, standing on a platform at the door, he introduced his pupils and comrades to the public, detailing the victories which each had won in the ring. Part of the play was, when business was slack, to excite the curiosity of the outsiders. A friend and myself were two of the outsiders on one occasion. Micky was expatiating on the exploits of Young Baldwin, the famous Little Bantam from Lancashire (the bull-necked youth, in fighting trim, stood with folded arms beside him), when a challenge rang out from the crowd. Who was the daring individual? The answer came that it was Jack Covington. "Nonsense," cried Micky, as he shaded his eyes to get a better view. "Divil take me, but it is, though. Make way there for Jack Covington, the champion of the feather-weights." Much handshaking on the platform ensued. And then of course there was an adjournment to the tent, where the Bantam and the champion were to have a pretty "set-to." And equally of course the party from the platform was followed inside by large numbers of the admiring

and now excited crowd. After each round with the gloves, the proprietor of the booth would be heard crying : " Give 'em a clap, gentlemen, if you think they are deserving of it," he himself setting the example. So did Micky Bent turn an honest penny, while the hat went round to buy the Bantam a new pair of braces !

Places of amusement were not very numerous in 1863, though they were no doubt sufficient to satisfy the wants of the population. There was only one theatre—the Theatre Royal ; but there were four or five concert halls. A photographer named Smith ran the Victoria Hall at the top of Grey Street, and Bagnall and Blakey were the proprietors of the Oxford Hall in the Cloth Market, previously known as " Balmbra's Grand Saloon." The Grainger Hotel, known as " Donald's," at the corner of Market Street and Grainger Street, was also open as a place of entertainment, and an old circus, standing on the site of the Audit Office of the North-Eastern Railway, had been converted by George Stanley into the Tyne Concert Hall. One visit to each was sufficient for the Victoria and the Oxford ; Donald's I never entered. Almost all I recollect of either is that Billy Thompson, a fat man with a fund of coarse humour, performed the functions of chairman at the Oxford. The Tyne Concert Hall, which

was the forerunner of the Tyne Theatre, was a long way the best of the variety shows. Favourites of the period thereat were Ned Corvan, a local songster who is not yet forgotten ; Tom Handforth, a negro minstrel who called himself the Black Diamond ; and Joe Wilson, the dialect poet who sang many of his own songs—" Geordy, Had the Bairn," the " Row on the Stairs," and so forth. The Tyne Theatre, erected at great cost in Westgate, was opened in 1867 under the management of Mr. Stanley. Its first pantomime, " Ye Lambton Worme," in which Mr. Fred W. Irish played the principal part, was a great success, and for years afterwards all the chief stars in the theatrical firmament flickered and shone in succession on its boards.

The Theatre Royal, long before and long after 1863, was managed by Mr. E. D. Davis. Stock companies were the order of the day then. Among the ladies who were members of these companies the most notable were Emily Cross, Ada Dyas, and Amy Fawsitt. The latter, after achieving great success as Lady Teazle in London, died miserably in America, betrayed and deserted by the villain she had trusted. Another favourite season actress was Fanny Addison. Once she played Juliet with a company of amateurs. Both Juliet and the audience, I recollect, nearly went into hysterics when Romeo

tumbled over the balcony! No season company was complete during the greater part of Mr. Davis's management without J. Roberts. "Good old Roberts!" a brother mime wrote of him, "he would play a dozen characters a night, and with the strictest impartiality—making them all alike." Of course he had a part in every play—now a messenger, anon a first robber, at other times the leader of a mob. It happened sometimes that he gave a strange turn to the few words he had to utter. Thus on one occasion, when he had to answer a question by Macbeth, he exclaimed, "'Tis the cry of wimming, good my lord!" On another occasion, when, as leader of the mob of citizens who thronged the Forum to hear Brutus speak on the murder of Cæsar, he had to express the contentment of his comrades, he and the rest of the six supers comprising the "multitude" were heard shouting, "We will be satisfized! let us be satisfized!" Alas! poor Roberts! one heard of the death of many greater men with more composure than one heard of his.

The touring system, which came into fashion about the end of the sixties, extinguished the stock company system. Stars, however, preceded touring companies. And so one saw at the Royal and the Tyne many of the leading performers of the day—Helen Fawcit, Lydia Thompson, and Mrs. Scott

Siddons, Charles Mathews, Joseph Jefferson, and Samuel Phelps. Lydia Thompson was one of the most popular actresses that ever appeared at the Royal in my time. Very old playgoers will recollect the enthusiasm which this clever and vivacious lady aroused in 1867. As a matter of fact, Lydia took the town by storm; almost everybody was talking and some were even raving about her; and the little house in Grey Street was crammed to overflowing every night of her engagement. It was as a burlesque actress that she was best known—though, for my part, I thought she shone still better in comedy. The part she played in a charming little piece called "Meg's Diversion" remains in my memory as one of the prettiest triumphs I ever saw on the stage. Years afterwards Miss Thompson appeared on the same boards in a clever burlesque with Lionel Brough. The roars of laughter these two produced will not be forgotten by anybody who witnessed their vocal and other antics. It was a wonderful display, devoid from beginning to end of the smallest suggestion of vulgarity. Other performances left vivid impressions too. For example, there was Shiel Barry, whose laugh as the miser Gaspard was as terrific in its way as the wild-cat shrieks of little Robson as Medea. Then there was Jefferson as Rip Van Winkle—a part he had played so often, I heard

him say, that he now and then went through some of the scenes as in a dream, wondering, when he recollected himself, whether he had made any mistakes during the period of forgetfulness. But the greatest performance of all, to my mind, was Phelps's Sir Pertinax MacSycophant. It was not acting—it seemed like real life. It was not Phelps one saw on the stage—it was the vile old hypocrite himself. If ever a finer thing was done on the boards, I never saw it.

Critics and admirers of the drama were perhaps more serious in the sixties than they are now. Three gentlemen—known as the "three K's"—brought exceptional knowledge and intelligence to bear on the tragedies they witnessed. One was John Kane, then secretary of the Ironworkers' Union; another was John Kirton, a friend of Anderson's and Macready's; and the third was William Kelly, a minor poet of considerable excellence. Detractors of the drama there might have been then; but none of them could have been as foolish as a relative of Mr. E. D. Davis's, who, when the old manager died in 1887, desired the newspapers to suppress all mention of the fact that he had for twenty or thirty years been the most prominent theatrical personage in Newcastle!

CHAPTER XLVIII

NEWCASTLE JOURNALISTS

THE journalists of Newcastle who flourished in the sixties, being many of them masters of the craft, and worthy men besides, deserve a special chapter.

Richard Welford exchanged journalism for commerce in 1862. Though I was too late to become his colleague, I was fortunate to become his friend. First secretary, then manager, and finally managing director of an important shipping company, Mr. Welford devoted his leisure to local history and antiquities. So he has enriched the literature of Tyneside and Northumberland with many valued and learned volumes. My immediate colleagues on the leading paper of the district were two—James Clephan and James Hay. Mr. Clephan, who had been editor of the *Gateshead Observer* in its palmy days, was a painstaking writer, something of a poet and a philosopher, an antiquary of repute, and much respected in all the serious circles of the town.

Towards the end of his long life he deliberately took to his bed and waited for death. He lived in bed, worked in bed, received his visitors in bed—all for months and months before the end came. Nor did he select the most comfortable position, for he lay with his head in the darkest corner of the room, and no persuasion on the part of his friends could induce him to change it. Mr. Hay removed early, first to Plymouth and then to Portsmouth, where, having acquired an expert knowledge of naval affairs, he was for years the correspondent of the *Times*. Latterly he purchased a paper at Melton Mowbray, which he conducted till his death in 1901. It was in 1863 that the present writer added his farthing candle to the general illumination. Soon there came three other colleagues, still in the same decade, who are entitled to separate paragraphs.

Sidney Milnes Hawkes was a barrister-at-law, and had been a man of means. I understood from himself that he had lost his fortune in some unlucky venture with his friend James Stansfeld, afterwards Sir James Stansfeld, and a member of various Liberal Governments. Devoted to Mazzini, he had assisted in some of the revolutionary enterprises that had startled Europe a few years before. Further, he had been brought in contact with many of the most eminent people of the

time, recollections of whom he long subsequently embodied in a series of lectures. Mr. Hawkes was a clever, but not a ready writer. As he never really liked the work, he exchanged a few years later the duties of a pressman for those of a publican. The Marsden Inn and the Marsden Grotto, situated on the picturesque coast between Shields and Sunderland, came under his control as the successor of the Allan family, an earlier member of which had carved a dwelling-house and a dancing-room out of the solid rock. Mr. Hawkes's tenancy commenced just about the time that the Whitburn Colliery was opened. The pitmen and quarrymen who patronised the Grotto and the Inn—the one on the sea shore the other high up on the cliffs—were sometimes an unruly lot. Mr. Hawkes, however, who was as gentle as a girl and as amiable as an angel, exercised a wonderful command over them even in their cups. There was not a more popular or a more highly respected man in the whole district than the landlord of Marsden Grotto. Mr. Hawkes had a large family. One of his sons, Mervyn Hawkes, having first tried his pinions as a contributor to the "Notes and Queries" of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, became attached to the London Press, wrote a political novel of considerable merit, and would probably have won a place of distinction in

journalism and literature if he had not died young. It was Mervyn Hawkes who, standing as a candidate for Eye against Mr. Ashmead Bartlett, challenged one of the supporters of his honourable opponent to run a race for the honour of representing the constituency !

William Stowell belonged to a clerical family. His father was the Rev. Dr. Stowell, related to the celebrated Hugh Stowell ; his brother became a clergyman of the Church of England ; and one of his sons entered the Congregational ministry. Our colleague himself was pastor of an Independent Church at Ryton. He preached and wrote equally well. His capacity for writing was immense. He could write at any length on any subject, whether he understood it or not, though he generally did understand it. I used to think that he could make more bricks without straw than anybody I ever knew. But there was this to be said for him—that he wrote about nothing that he did not make attractive. Mr. Stowell had some strong tastes—for strong tea and strong tobacco particularly. The tobacco was black : so also was the tea (which he brewed himself) as it came from the pot. One day, when some carpenters were employed in making alterations in the office, Stowell mislaid his pouch. Whereupon, the carpenters having gone home, he went crying

along the corridor that the "working classes" had stolen his tobacco! A smart repartee of his is also worth recalling. The members of the staff were taking tea at the office when John Lovell, then manager of the Press Association, was introduced to the company. "Mr. Stowell!" said Lovell: "any relation of Lord Stowell?" "No—o," slowly replied Stowell: "any relation of Lord Lovel?" Our colleague had the best of that deal. When he died in the prime of life, he was buried in the picturesque churchyard of Ryton, where troops of friends assembled from all the district round to testify their respect for his memory.

Perhaps the best known member of the staff was Thomas Nelson Brown, who came from Dunfermline, but who had previously earned a good reputation as a platform speaker in Glasgow. More than thirty years later I met in Madeira a retired and wealthy manufacturer (Mr. John Leckie, of Walsall) who had been in far-away days a sort of disciple of his on the banks of the Clyde. Mr. Brown's prodigious memory was the wonder of his colleagues, as was his marvellous fund of anecdote. His mind was a veritable storehouse of poetry. I believe he could recite the whole of Pollok's "Course of Time," besides hundreds of other poems. And he knew more of Scotch

theology than half the professors put together. Moreover, he talked so well that I often thought he missed his vocation when he took to the press instead of the pulpit. But the worst of it was that he did not quite know when to stop talking, especially if he chanced to meet a friend in the street. Brown and Clephan were in the habit, at the close of the night's work, of seeing each other home. Usually they fell into such enthralling discussions that the process lasted till far into the morning. Once, when the whole town was sleeping, they were overtaken by a shower of rain, and took refuge in a doorway. Here they were seen by a new policeman, who ordered them off the premises, hinting that they could be up to no good purpose at that hour and in that place. Brown, of course, remonstrated ; but Clephan, appreciating the humour of the situation, retired quietly to his virtuous couch. But the midnight rambles of the two friends did not cease with this *contretemps*. I believe they were continued till the elder of the two, as recorded above, took to his bed to wait for death.

The office of sub-editor was held for many years by a careful and painstaking pressman—William Duncan. Being a Scot, and an Aberdonian at that, he was as cautious as the policeman in Callander

who (as previously recorded) declined to say which was the best hotel in the place because he was a person in authority. Mr. Duncan was a Latin scholar, and was, indeed, so saturated with the speech and style of the ancient Romans that they coloured almost all he said or wrote. When he retired from the active pursuit of journalism, his colleagues presented him with an illuminated address. Thereafter he had sufficient employment as official reporter for the Town Council. William Duncan and James Hornsby were two of the oldest members of the staff in 1863.

Hornsby reported the inquests and the police-courts. If information was wanted, he was the man to get it. Of course he met with many rebuffs. One was administered by Mr. L. M. Cockcroft, then coroner for South Northumberland. News of a certain inquest was required. The coroner declined to supply it. Late at night James—we all called him James—"tried him again." The coroner answered the door in his dressing gown. "What!" he exclaimed, as he caught sight of the reporter, "you here again!" and he slammed the door in his face. The insult did not disturb the reporter in the least: it was, he said, all in the way of his work. Mr. Hornsby was an enthusiast in phonography. Besides teaching classes

in England, he went on a phonographic mission to America. Horace Greeley received him courteously, and next day printed a paragraph in the *New York Tribune*, announcing that "Professor Hornsby from Europe" had arrived to enlighten the citizens of the Great Republic on the subject of shorthand!

We had two rivals in 1863. One is dead. It claimed, I think, to be the first penny daily paper established in the North of England. A printer named John Watson started it in Darlington in 1855, bringing it to Newcastle just before the other newspaper proprietors converted their weeklies into dailies. The paper was owned at the time I mention by a wholesale grocer, and had just previously been edited by a clever but unscrupulous journalist of the name of James Bolivar Manson. The editor had got himself into so many escapades that the proprietor presumably thought it was better he should return to Scotland. At any rate he had just left Newcastle in 1863, though he still continued to write the leading articles. But one of his escapades showed his smartness so much, and yet had such ludicrous consequences, that some of the particulars may be considered interesting.

A municipal election in one of the wards of the town had given rise to a good deal of bigoted feeling on account of one of the candidates being a Roman

Catholic—a highly respected gentleman of the name of Dunn. The French consul at the time was the Comte de Maricourt. And M. de Maricourt was accused of interfering in the election on behalf of Mr. Dunn. Shortly before the contest, Newcastle society had been greatly scandalised by the doings of a notorious Frenchwoman. This woman, owing to the action of the police, had been expelled the town. The paper took up the cry against the consul; the editor wrote a furious article on the subject; and the article concluded with a frightful sting—"Monsieur must follow Madame." It was clever, but it was outrageous. The conjunction in the same sentence as deserving of the same treatment of a respectable nobleman with a disreputable procuress naturally excited great indignation. The consul's son, the Vicomte de Maricourt, a young officer in the French army, happened to be on a visit to his father. Him the insult aroused to fury. The young man presented himself at the editor's house with a revolver, demanding a written apology. Mr. Manson was compelled to accompany his visitor to the office, where he wrote the declaration the Vicomte de Maricourt required. Then came proceedings in the police-court. The affair was compromised in some way. But the editor followed the consul.

Mr. Manson left a flavour of romance behind him. From the circumstance about to be related one would conclude that he was what our American cousins used to call a "festive cus." It chanced that I needed to rent a house. The house that I thought would suit me, situated at the corner of two streets, was owned and once occupied by a chemist who was on intimate terms with the journalist. The chemist was proud of the connection. Manson and Marley were bosom friends—neighbours too. Often had the one held high revels in the other's house. When Marley was showing the prospective tenant over the house, he pointed to the parlour window as he gleefully said, "Many's the time Manson has smashed that window as he has been going home hilarious." The smashing of the window seemed to be regarded by the owner as a token and evidence of affection on the part of his friend.

About this house I have another story to tell. It was situated, I have said, at the corner of two streets. A little grass plot ran round the two sides. The mother of the family, being new to Newcastle, was anxious for the safety of her children: so she used to padlock the gate in order to prevent them from wandering away. As for myself, I was always late at the office; moreover, when I returned home in the early hours of the morning, it was my custom

to sit up reading for an hour or two. These things were noted by a neighbour on the opposite side of one of the streets. The neighbour put two and two together and built up a beautiful theory. It chanced that he was acquainted with a friend of mine. To this friend he one day imparted his suspicions. "We have some queer folks living opposite to us," he said. "The man is at home all day; there is a light burning all night; and the gate is always padlocked. I fancy they are coiners!" Such was the reputation the writer had acquired in the neighbourhood till his friend had the opportunity of explaining that the mysterious and nocturnal habits of the journalist were due to the exigencies of work on a daily newspaper.

Clever stories are apt to be attributed to all sorts of different people, especially if the said people should happen to be noted for saying smart things. It is likely, therefore, that the rather profane story which was ascribed to Manson may have been told of other wits. Anyhow, it is good enough for anybody. Manson, having returned to Edinburgh, was in conversation with an acquaintance, who remarked as a curious circumstance that he had been mistaken for the Duke of Argyll. "That's nothing," said Manson; "I was taken for a bigger card than the duke." "Ay, and who was that?" "Well,

as I was crossing the North Bridge, a man I had not seen for years stepped right in front of me and exclaimed, 'God Almighty! is that you?'"

Mr. Manson's immediate successor was a young Scotchman—James Macdonell. I had but a slight acquaintance with him, for he tarried in Newcastle only a year or two. Almost all I remember was that he was tall and slim, and wore his hair long. Mr. Macdonell became afterwards a famous journalist in London—first as a coadjutor of Thornton Hunt's on the *Daily Telegraph*, and then as a coadjutor of J. T. Delane's on the *Times*. Most of the best articles on foreign affairs that appeared in the Thunderer from 1876 to 1879 were credited to him. Unfortunately, his brilliant career was of short duration. When he died, many of his brother-journalists wrote touching and beautiful things to his memory. Even as late as 1885 Mr. Escott published a panegyric in the *Chicago Times*, and at a still later date his biography was written by Dr. Robertson Nicoll.

Mr. Macdonell was succeeded by Mr. R. N. Worth, who came from Plymouth, and returned thither, after a few years in the North. Mr. Worth was the author of a "History of Devonshire," and of some other works of a topographical and historical character. The hand of the syndicate was upon

the unfortunate property by this time. The syndicate entertained the strange delusion that opinion, or what was supposed to be opinion, if poured into a given mould in London, would be gratefully received in Newcastle and in Plymouth and in many other places between. The false estimate that had thus been formed of the weakness and ductility of the public mind of England was fatal to the paper. The candle flickered and guttered for some years longer, but went out at last, almost without anybody knowing that it had ceased to smoulder.

The other daily contemporary had in earlier days been a fierce and somewhat scurrilous party organ. It had once suggested that John Bright, who had been announced to visit Alnwick at the beginning of the Anti-Corn Law agitation, should be dipped in a horse-pond. And it had made some insulting observations about the wife of a Newcastle alderman which caused a considerable rumpus in the town. For this outrage the editor was publicly horsewhipped by the son of the injured lady. The young man who had thus avenged his mother became in after-years the Mayor of Newcastle, besides being decorated by the Crown for his services to the Volunteer movement. But he had broken the law in his generous anger : so he had to suffer—perhaps one ought rather to say enjoy—a period of

imprisonment. The detention was rendered pleasant and agreeable by the visits and commendations he received the while from his friends. But the paper in 1863 had ceased to play the scurvy tricks which brought indignity upon its former editor. It was still a Tory organ, but a Tory organ that knew how to behave decently.

The staff of the paper in the sixties included three gentlemen who need not be nameless. One was the son of an Independent minister in the town. Leaving Newcastle, he was first the editor of the *Leeds Mercury*, and then literary director of the great printing and publishing firm of Cassell, Petter, and Galpin. For some years past he has been familiar in the world of politics and literature as Sir T. Wemyss Reid, founder of *The Speaker*, and author of "Gladys Fane" and a memoir of Charlotte Bronté. Mr. Reid, I believe, was both reporter and occasional leader-writer. The chief of the reporting staff was John W. Lowes, reputed to be the fastest note-taker in the North of England, equal even to taking a verbatim note of Sir George Grey, who rattled away like a Gatling gun. Mr. Lowes, the author of a system of shorthand of his own, was a native of Durham, whither he retired, and where he died a long time ago. Among the junior reporters was Thomas Lawson, who, when

John H. Amos was appointed to the secretaryship of the River Tees Commissioners, was elected to an important and confidential office in the Corporation of Newcastle.

Newspaper success depends even more upon skilful management than upon skilful writing. One of the most skilful managers of the time of which I am writing, and long afterwards, was Richard Bagnall Reed. No shrewder intellect than his, I think, was ever connected with the press. If he did not write much himself, he knew how to instruct and inspire others to write. And his energy was amazing. Nothing in any department of the paper escaped his watchful eye. Added to untiring zeal was a marvellous capacity for gauging the tastes and requirements of the reading public. Mr. Reed was a newspaper genius who, had his lines been cast in other walks of life, would have attained distinction wherever he sought it. To him must be ascribed the credit of raising the press of the North of England from the parochialism of an earlier day to the rank and dignity it has ever since enjoyed.

CHAPTER XLIX

JOSEPH COWEN

BUT the ablest journalist of them all was Joseph Cowen. The rest were pigmies beside him. The real journalist, like the real poet, is born, not made. The qualities which come to others as the result of laborious effort come to him by instinct. So it was with Mr. Cowen. Having a passion for public service, a faith to preach, and an object to accomplish, he made of the paper he owned and controlled an organ of illumination and beneficence.

Mr. Cowen, however, was a journalist and something more. Journalism, indeed, was only an incident. No better business man was probably to be found in the North of England. But business was only an incident too. It was merely a means to an end, just as the newspaper was. A propagandist from his earliest youth, Mr. Cowen had something to say, and sought all sorts of opportunities of saying it. Then the press became the

(*From photo by Robt. Barrass, Newcastle-on-Tyne*, 1892.)

[*To face p.* 494.

adjunct of the platform. It was when a regular channel of conveying his ideas to the public had been acquired that the natural aptitude of the born journalist discovered itself. Nobody knows so well the difficulty of gauging the public wants and forecasting the public sentiments as the man engaged in conducting a newspaper. In Mr. Cowen's case the knowledge of how to do it seemed to come by intuition. Thus the press in his hands became, as I have said, a machine for spreading enlightenment and effecting progress. But Mr. Cowen was more than a great journalist: he was a great man—great in every variation of human activity—a great politician, a great orator, a great instructor of the people, with sympathies that embraced all the races of the earth. What he did for the struggling nationalities of Europe, when kings and emperors were banded together to keep down the natural aspiration for freedom, will never be known. Yet some of the results of his labours and sacrifices may be seen to-day in the emancipation of Italy from the thraldom of petty despots and foreign oppressors.

For years and years Mr. Cowen was the Tribune of the North. No man in our time spoke as he spoke for the Northern race. The characteristics, the ideas, the idiosyncrasies, even the prejudices

of the people among whom he had been born and bred, were more truly represented by him than were those of any other district by any other prominent figure in public life. Mr. Cowen was a Tynesider from top to toe—"native and to the manner born." Few men better understood or better appreciated the brusque and sturdy race of which in its higher traits he was himself a type. And he was "hail fellow" with the proudest and the humblest—with lord and lordling, keelman and puddler. The tastes of the common people were to some extent his tastes—as, for instance, in the countenance he gave to aquatics in the palmy days of Clasper and Chambers. It was generally his custom, too, before the Races were removed from the Town Moor, to share in the exhilaration of the scene when the favourite won the Pitman's Derby. The amusements of the people, though he had practically none of his own, always interested him. And then his native Doric—it was never changed, and never sought to be changed. What was good enough for Hotspur was good enough for him. Thick of speech, as Shakspeare says of Hotspur, indeed he was; but the glowing periods in which he denounced the enemies of liberty from the platform of the Lecture Room or the Town Hall obtained an added force from the deep and

mystical burr. Nor did it prevent him from electrifying the House of Commons as he had many a time and oft electrified vast gatherings of his own townsfolk.

Most of the commentators in the London press at the time of his death, on Feb. 18th, 1900, alluded to the early difficulty which some of the members of the House of Commons experienced in understanding all that Mr. Cowen said. But this difficulty, greatly exaggerated by envious critics, was soon overcome. The overcoming it was itself a triumph for the orator. Had there not been matter behind the unusual pronunciation of the speaker, the House would never have filled as I have seen halls and theatres and circuses filled in the North when Mr. Cowen was delivering an address. (Who that was present can ever forget the scenes of wild enthusiasm that occurred in the Town Hall every time he appeared before the electors during his parliamentary contests?) While all the commentators spoke in one emphatic tone of the power of his eloquence, some of them ventured the opinion that Mr. Cowen lacked the ready skill of the debater. This was a mistake. It was Mr. Cowen's custom, at the close of his great harangues, to submit himself to the examination of his constituents. All sorts of questions—

dozens of them, scores of them, almost hundreds of them—were put and answered in a night. And I used to think that these impromptu replies were sometimes more effective, because less polished, than the well-studied speech that had preceded them. Readiness and promptitude in answering a question, stating an argument, explaining a policy, expounding a principle, or exposing a fallacy—these are qualities that go to the making of an accomplished debater, and Mr. Cowen had them all to perfection. But the critics and observers in Parliament had only rare opportunities of seeing and hearing Mr. Cowen, and not even then perhaps at his best. We in Newcastle, who had seen and heard him so often that we knew every trick and mood and attitude, the expressive turn of the head, the impressive tone of the voice, the significant wave and shake of the finger—we in Newcastle knew infinitely better than any gentleman in London to what heights of power and oratory our great tribune was capable of ascending. I have heard most of the famous speakers of the last fifty years, and I venture to declare that never a speaker among them had anything like the same power of moving and inspiring a vast audience as Mr. Cowen had.

The speeches of great speakers will not always

bear reproduction in unimpassioned type. Some of us will remember Henry Vincent. He spoke like a whirlwind, and like a whirlwind swept his audiences before him. But his best efforts, if reported word for word, would have been but tawdry stuff—mere sound and fury, signifying little. It was much the same with other famous speakers. Mr. Cowen saw this default, and determined to evade it in his own case. Hence the preparation he gave to his set deliverances—the thought and study and information he put into them. Never in any contest before or since was so masterly a series of speeches delivered as those which Mr. Cowen addressed to the electors of Newcastle in 1874, and again in 1885. To read them even now, when the subjects discussed have become mere matters of history, is to get a new view of the dignity and grandeur of the English language.

I have said already that the speeches of Mr. Cowen are classics. Take down the volume in which Major Evan R. Jones collected some of them together, open it where you like, and see whether you can resist the desire to read to the end. They will stand the test of time as well as Burke's, and perhaps even better than Canning's. Every word is a stroke, every sentence a poem or

a sermon, every speech a lesson and an exposition. A Parliamentary reporter asked his editor what he was to do with a speech of Robert Lowe's. "Cut it down," said the editor; "give only the points." "You forget," replied the reporter; "a speech of Lowe's is all points." Much the same may be said of Mr. Cowen's, which are studded with gems as well as points—all brilliant and all genuine. Even as you read, you are constrained to pause if you mean to drink in all the beauty of diction or all the richness of thought—to pause as long and as often as when reading an essay of Emerson's or a chapter from Ruskin. A popular novelist, who is as skilful with words and as inventive in ideas as any of her contemporaries, assured me months before the catastrophe of Feb., 1900, that it was her habit, when she felt in want of an intellectual stimulant, to refresh her jaded spirits with a draught from one of Mr. Cowen's speeches. Since Major Jones's volume was published, many other brilliant performances were added to the public store. All have been issued in isolated form. One could wish for nothing better than the issue of a new and complete collection.

There were many sides to Mr. Cowen's character—so many that the most intimate of his friends probably did not know them all. Few outside his

own circle, for instance, knew that he at one time practically managed a great theatre when fortunes were made in it. Business, finance, journalism, stagecraft—Mr. Cowen was expert at them all. Had his inclinations lain in the direction of office, had he been endowed with the pliability which seems to be necessary to statecraft, he would have made a brilliant Chancellor of the Exchequer or a still more brilliant Secretary for Foreign Affairs. But he was content with moulding and influencing the opinions and affairs of his own people. For the rest, he had but one recreation—books. It was his hobby to buy books, the best and choicest in the market. But he also read them. And all he said and wrote bore evidence, not only of deep and original thought, but of wide and absorbent reading. Gifted with a splendid memory, versed in all sorts of knowledge, and thoroughly acquainted with almost all branches of literature, he was able to illuminate every question he discussed or expounded with examples and precepts from ancient and modern writers—from classic and recent history—from the philosophers of the pagan world or the poets and essayists of our own dear land.

It is recorded in the "Life and Letters of Dean Lake" that that eminent divine consulted Mr. Cowen before he launched his great scheme for the

establishment of the Durham College of Science. And the same thing happened whenever any other important project connected with the North of England was under consideration. Mr. Cowen's counsel was always invaluable in these matters. Nor was the help of his influence less useful or less esteemed. Besides the moral support that he gave to great enterprises, the material support which followed it was ever most liberal and generous. But far more numerous than his public were his private benefactions. Many a struggling acquaintance and many a troubled entertainer owed their rescue from despondency to his ready assistance.

Mr. Cowen, when the political party with which he had previously acted became estranged and embittered, was accused of inconsistency. No hollower accusation was ever made. Mr. Cowen was no more enamoured of a "foolish consistency" than Emerson was. A given policy is only applicable in the same circumstances. But circumstances, changing from year, and often from month to month, are seldom the same. It was the policy of the British Government at the time of the Russian invasion of Turkey that caused the rupture between Mr. Cowen and his former political friends—this and the attempt to introduce "machine politics" into England. Russia, however, though she then

seemed to pose as a liberator, had no more altered in character than a leopard could change its spots. She still stood for despotism. Mr. Cowen once likened her to a huge iceberg, which, sailing into summer seas, caused everything to freeze or shiver around it. Russia had dismembered Poland and crushed Hungary. These things, forgotten by the politicians of the period, could not be forgotten by Mr. Cowen. Where, then, was his inconsistency? But the estrangement had a disastrous effect. It led the one masterly politician of the district to retire from Parliament and ultimately from public life. The loss to Tyneside has never since ceased to be deplored. Rarely afterwards did Mr. Cowen entrance his townsmen with his eloquence. But when for special reasons he emerged from his retirement, the public interest in his addresses, all models and all classics, showed the abiding affection of the people for the greatest among them.

The last words of eminent men are always interesting. The last words of Mr. Cowen were pathetic and gratifying as well. Before he closed his eyes in what proved to be his final sleep, he said to his daughter: "I am very comfortable." Truly his end was peace.

CHAPTER L

ERRORS AND SINGULARITIES OF THE PRESS

THE linotype machine is an ingenious invention. Like the Chassepot at Mentana, it has done wonders. But it is also responsible, I am afraid, for many of the dismal errors that so often appear in the press, the reason being that the whole process of type-setting, or rather of type-casting, is now almost purely mechanical. Added to this there is the difficulty of correcting the mistakes the printers have made, inducing people in charge of newspapers who know the value of time to abstain from correcting them at all. The thing is unfortunate, because the blunders, besides being liable to mislead the ignorant or half-educated reader, are calculated to cause confusion in his mind as to the real meaning of words.

"Literals," mistakes of mere letters, were common enough in the old days. Now the errors of the press take the form of substituting a wrong word for the right one. Blunders of this more serious

kind were formerly rectified in a paragraph devoted to errata, as in the celebrated case of the American editor who had reported that a Baptist minister was "spanked in infancy," and who inserted a correction in his next issue—"for 'spanked,' read 'sprinkled.'" But no attempt is made to explain such matters now. Indeed, if it were made, a considerable space would be required for the purpose. Hence, unless there should be a libel in the case, blunders remain blunders. Once for a few weeks I went to the trouble of making a collection of the errors I had seen in newspapers. Here are a few of them:— "Described" was printed for "descried," "received" for "reviewed," "bloated" for "floated," "recognised" for "reorganized," "transmitted" for "transmuted," "immunity" for "impunity," "affected" for "afflicted," "denoted" for "devoted," "denied" for "deprived," "comprised" for "compressed," "converged" for "conversed," "wonder" for "winter," "invitation" for "initiative," "glister" for "glitter," "warrior" for "wanderer," "masked" for "marked," "stained" for "strained," "disposed" for "disputed," "animal spirits" for "annual sports," "infernal agreement" for "informal agreement," and "devil to play" for "devil to pay"! When Dr. Johnson was asked by a lady how he came to make a certain mistake in his

dictionary, he is said to have replied, "Pure ignorance, madame." Pure ignorance would perhaps be the rightful explanation of many of the errors that appear in newspapers—pure ignorance on the part of reporters or sub-editors, compositors or printers' readers. What but pure ignorance could make anybody speak of "poems by Dante, Gabriel, and Rossetti"? The cause of the great majority of errors, however, is the haste which all engaged in the production of newspapers display to be first on the market.[1]

Errors of the press have furnished food for mirth to many generations—ever since the early printers printed the first Bibles. Dismissing all the old standards—such as the substitution of the word "sauce" for the word "sense" in Ross's translation of Lessing's "Laocoon"—a few recent examples that have not been collected before may amuse the reader. A controversialist wrote of Irishmen that they couldn't tell "whether they would like to cuddle maidens on Mars or have England pitch Ulster," etc.; but the ingenious printer made him say that Irishmen couldn't tell whether they wanted to cuddle "maidens or mars"—maidens or

[1] It was no doubt to this cause that we must ascribe a recent feat of a Plymouth daily. The name of my old friend the member for Morpeth was therein given as "Mr. Durt, M.P."

mammas! The report of an application for contempt of court against a newspaper stated that the said newspaper had accused a party to a suit then pending of "mailing Tory misstatements to the country." What the newspaper had said was that he had been "nailing Tory misstatements to the counter"! And then there was the report of an inquest in which it was twice stated that the deceased had died of "inflammation of the bowls." Which rather reminds one of the quack doctor who, explaining the anatomy of the human frame, said that the principal organs were "the heart, the liver, and the bowels, of which there are five—*a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, and sometimes *w* and *y*!"

One of the most exasperating misprints that ever appeared in a newspaper, though it is amusing enough now, occurred in the report of an address which the Rev. T. Harwood Pattinson, now a professor in a Theological College at Rochester, U.S., delivered in Newcastle in 1872. The effect of an eloquent appeal in favour of peace was entirely destroyed, so far as the report was concerned, by a misprint in the word "save." For the audience was urged to take its place in that increasing host—

> Along whose front no sabres shine,
> No blood-red pennons wave,
> Whose banner bears the simple line,
> "Our duty is to shave."

Here the mistake was a single word; but many

words were misprinted in a passage from Byron's "Siege of Corinth" which Mr. Joseph Cowen quoted in a speech at Blaydon in 1876. The poet's lines, describing the work of dogs on a battle-field, were weird and magnificent :—

> From a Tartar's skull they had stripp'd the flesh,
> As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
> And the white tusks crunch'd o'er the whiter skull,
> As it slipp'd through their jaws when their edge grew dull,
> As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
> When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed.

But the printer made them ludicrous :—

> From the Tartar's skull they had stripped the flesh
> As ye *feed the pig* when the fruit is fresh;
> And their white tusks crushed o'er the whiter skull
> As it slipped thro' their jaws when their edge grew dull,
> As they *largely resembled* the bones of the dead,
> When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed.

Reporters, when they "let themselves go," as we say, sometimes play strange pranks with the King's English. One whom I knew wrote of an actor who was playing the Ghost in "Hamlet" that he had a "semi-resurrectionary voice." Another was guilty of curious carelessness. Reporting a speaker who related the origin of a recreation ground, he made him remark that "a cabbage garden was taken in hand by some enterprising gentlemen who lived in the neighbourhood, most of whom, he was sorry to say, were now dead,

and converted into a park." But these feats were pardonable compared with that of the reporter who, in an account of a notable man's funeral, got off the following :—" It was a boisterous winter's day, with fitful showers of rain and hail ; and as the polished coffin was borne into the church the lid was sprinkled with rain, like dew-drops on a laburnum leaf, which was a great contrast to wreaths of flowers, as the deceased did not approve of them ! "

There was a time when even the editorial articles of a leading London daily were strewn with rare specimens of gush and bathos. The " young lions " of the *Daily Telegraph* produced every morning columns of fantastic literature that made the hair of staid old journalists stand on end. The staid old *Standard*, indeed, allowed itself to print at irregular but frequent intervals clever parodies of the style of the *Gaily Bellograph*. Elderly people will recollect the wonderful meteoric visitation of 1866. Thomas Aird wrote a famous line that extorted the admiration of George Gilfillan describing the sky in a storm as " like a red bewilder'd map with lightning scribbled o'er." It was not lightning, but meteors, that " scribbled o'er " the sky on two or three November nights in that year. Myriads of rockets seemed to be darting noiselessly hither and thither all over the heavens. Not a

second passed without innumerable meteors of varying sizes and brilliancy coming into view. Sometimes it appeared as if all the stars in the firmament were seized with a mad impulse to rush into each other's arms. People woke up their children—I did mine—to show them the great wonder. Hundreds of writers tried to picture the entrancing sight. Some succeeded fairly well; others utterly failed. As a matter of fact, it was a spectacle that could not with any approach to accuracy be described in words. But the "young lions" of the *Telegraph* were equal to the occasion. One of them—Godfrey Turner or Jefferey Prowse most likely, for George Augustus Sala had cut his wisdom teeth by that time—called the meteors "baby stars that had died in teething"! The earthly leonid who had ventured on this daring metaphor was probably the same youthful spirit that had spoken of the New Year "as a new volume for which Time's scythe would serve as paper-knife"!

Journalists, like actors, are exposed to the temptation of playing to the gallery. Some of them played to the gallery when they accepted gutter stories—stories that were based on the horrible crimes of Burke and Hare or the perhaps still more infamous career of Charles Peace. The policy of

pandering to the lowest taste of the lowest section of the populace in the matter of fiction was not pursued for long. It was pursued long enough, however, to get at least one young lad into trouble. The lad was tried in 1888 before the Recorder of a provincial town on a charge of housebreaking. When asked what he had to say for himself, he replied that he had been reading the story of Charles Peace in a weekly newspaper, and that this had led him to commit the robbery. Earnest appeals were made to newspapers which professed to be intended for family reading not to "run the very filth of gutters and sewers through our kitchens, our parlours, and even our nurseries." The appeals had a good effect in at least one instance; for a Cardiff paper, which had begun the horrible and demoralising narrative, announced that it intended to publish no more of the vile trash. Stories of a less reprehensible character, but still of a low and vulgar type, were then, and long afterwards, offered to weekly journals by a gentleman who boasted that his serials raised the circulation of the papers which published them by thousands a week. This ingenious author had three or four stories, or alleged stories, which he used to adapt to different localities according to the orders he received. The title of one of the tales, which had, he said, been printed

no nearer than Bedford, and which he proposed to refurbish for the Northern market, might have stood for that of a penny dreadful of the Edward Lloyd period—"Newcastle's Lovely Lady Martyr; or, Doomed to Fire and Faggot: A Northumberland Romance of the Middle Ages." If this would not suit, he intimated that he had other tales of blood and murder and mystery which he could localise at a cheaper rate. Even "Newcastle's Lovely Lady Martyr," however, would have been less degrading to the press, and less demoralising to the public, than the dishing up of Peace's revolting crimes in the shape of fiction.

It was a passing danger, that which beset the press in 1888. A more serious danger seems to be threatened by an organization that has lately sprung into existence. If the members of the Institute of Journalists should succeed in making journalism a strict and exclusive profession, they will do the press an infinite injury. One of the great merits of the journalistic craft is that it is free and open to everybody who can justify his claims to admission, whether he has been trained in a newspaper office or not. "Gentlemen of the Press," as Mr. Disraeli called them, are recruited from all ranks and callings in the country. Some, I know, have been blacksmiths, others tailors, others factory-workers. In fact, there

is scarcely a pursuit in the land that is not represented among the people who manage and write for our newspapers. And it is this catholicity of selection that helps to give to journalism its unique character and position. But it would be otherwise if, unfortunately, through the action of the Institute of Journalists or in any other way, the ranks should be closed to all but such as had passed through a restricted form of indenture or apprenticeship. The tendency of the times, however, is to create a system of castes. Let journalists beware how they encourage that tendency. We know what the caste system has done for India. There the man who carries water is not permitted to fetch coals, and the man who fetches coals is not permitted to sweep a carpet. Thus progress, in consequence of the stereotyped regulation of society, has been utterly impossible for centuries. The same deplorable condition is creeping into our workshops; for there men are trained to do certain work, and are not allowed to do any other—trained, as Emerson says, to be mere spindles and needles, and nothing else. Once admit the fatal system into journalism, and it is simply a matter of time when reporters will not be permitted to become editors, nor editors managers, nor anybody anything but that which he has paid a handsome premium for becoming. It is probably

this question of premium much more than any interest in the profession that inspires the sordid part of the movement. Of all the errors of the press no greater could be committed than that of yielding to the suggestions of the fussy and pedantic gentlemen who are as proud as peacocks when they are able to write strange initials after their names.

CHAPTER LI

ECCENTRIC AND CRAZY PEOPLE

CRAZY people are nearly always sure, sooner or later, to put themselves in communication with the press. When a mad shoemaker murdered a tax-collector in Newcastle, he remarked to the policeman who arrested him, "This will be a grand thing for the penny papers." Usually the connection is much closer than that implied in providing material for sensational news. For more than thirty years, to my own knowledge, there never was a time when one or more lunatics, not including poets, were not in direct and almost constant communication with the editor of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*. Some sent indecipherable prose, others indecipherable verse. Some were crazy about the shape of the earth, others were crazy about being buried alive. But there was a bee in the bonnet of them all. Sometimes the correspondent was not known even by name, sometimes only by name, at other times personally known. The correspondence

would sometimes continue for months, sometimes for years, and then suddenly cease. In either case we knew quite well that the unfortunate correspondent was either dead or had become helpless. It was of course the crazy people who were personally known, and who insisted on seeing the editor, that gave the most trouble.

An afternoon alone with a madman, or one akin to a madman, is not a pleasant experience. I once went through it. Mr. William Bewicke, of Threepwood Hall, near Haydon Bridge, "a gentleman of considerable property, ancient family, and Herculean frame, but unfortunately gifted with a violent temper, and of eccentric habits," made use of his power as a magistrate to unlawfully arrest a poor woman of the neighbourhood. For this the woman's husband subsequently obtained damages, while the Lord Chancellor struck the name of the offender off the roll of justices of the peace. Mr. Bewicke, refusing to pay the expenses of his own solicitors, was served by them with a writ. One morning in January, 1861, a sheriff's officer from Hexham proceeded with several assistants to execute the writ. Mr. Bewicke, armed with a rifle, locked his doors and parleyed with the party from a window. The bailiffs, however, took possession of the stables. Here two of them remained in possession. But

during the night, they alleged, Mr. Bewicke fired at them from the house. Then followed his arrest for feloniously shooting at the bailiffs. The prisoner defended himself at the Assizes in Newcastle, with the result that he was convicted and sentenced to four years' penal servitude. Mr. Bewicke was the victim of a dastardly plot. The housekeeper at Threepwood set herself to prove it. As the consequence of extraordinary efforts on her part, three of the witnesses for the prosecution, just a year after the original trial, were found guilty of conspiracy. It was their turn to suffer penal servitude, while Mr. Bewicke was, of course, released. The whole case was so strange and romantic that the editor of the *Weekly Chronicle*, in an unguarded moment, determined to retell the story. The narrative was published in 1875. Mr. Bewicke took exception to some of the details, and demanded an interview with the editor, which was readily granted. There was nothing really wrong with the narrative; but Mr. Bewicke insisted on going through every sentence with the editor. The two were alone in an upper room of the office. Every now and then, as the reading proceeded, the visitor, who was accurately described as a man of "Herculean frame," would rise in a rage, storm about the room, and almost terrify the

other out of his wits. All the arts the editor knew had to be employed to pacify the furious gentleman. Scarcely a statement in the story failed to stir up angry recollections. There was just a fear that the excitable visitor would associate the editor with his wrongs, in which case the unhappy man expected to be throttled in his chair or hurled into the street below. The time of terror lasted all a summer's afternoon, with no help at hand either. No man was more thankful than the editor when the interview ended. The corrections Mr. Bewicke required were printed in the next issue. And as these happily appeased the wrath of the injured and eccentric laird of Threepwood, nothing more was heard of the affair.

The scientific articles which Mr. R. A. Proctor was contributing to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* in 1883 aroused the ire of another eccentric gentleman, who, however, luckily limited his attentions to the writing of scurrilous and abusive letters from Balham. Mr. John Hampden was a flat-earth fanatic who had offered a large sum of money—£500, I think—to anybody who could prove the curvature of the globe. The challenge was accepted by Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, the celebrated naturalist who is associated with Darwin in suggesting the theory of the origin of species. Experiments were made

on the Bedford Canal, and the verdict of the arbitrator was given against Mr. Hampden. The result of the litigation that followed was, I think, that Mr. Hampden got himself cast into prison. Many of Mr. Hampden's letters on the subject were printed in the *Weekly Chronicle*. But many others could not be printed on account of their violent and offensive character. Specimens of the rejected contributions have been preserved. A few of them may serve to amuse a later generation of readers:— "If, instead of dishonourably suppressing two-thirds of my letters, you would leave out the same proportion of the infamously false statements contained in Mr. Proctor's articles, it would be much more to your credit. The shameful lies which this man is publishing every week, both in your paper and in his own, are a disgrace to the journalism of England. He is openly spoken of as a lying charlatan all over the kingdom. He may depend upon my thoroughly exposing him, and the contemptible cur shall be taught now to speak the truth." This is not bad. The following, however, seems to go one better:— "The most conclusive argument in favour of myself with respect to the survey to which Mr. Proctor makes allusion (the Bedford Canal experiment) is to request that gentleman to inform Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace, of Grays, in the county of Essex, that I am

still, at the expiration of eight years, advertising him as a cheat, a swindler, and a defaulter; if the degraded cur dares to take any notice, or can justify his conduct by repeating the experiment in the presence of honest men, he can sue me for slander and libel. Mr. Proctor is the only man in England who has degraded himself by defending the swindler Wallace." Mr. Proctor had written something about the origin of whales; whereupon Mr. Hampden wrote to him direct:—"If you would endeavour to describe the origin of liars and impostors, you would find they came into the world when the Pagan lunatics devised the shape of the world. If whales are derived from pigs, according to your theory, you must have been foaled by an ass!"

Mr. Empson E. Middleton, a disciple of the same school as Mr. Hampden, was also a frequent correspondent of the *Weekly Chronicle*. Who and what else he was Mr. Middleton explained in a pamphlet which he printed in 1876. There he described himself as "the Poet, Geometrician, Metaphysician, Lecturer, and Patentee in Yacht and Ship Building, E. E. Middleton, Esq., member of the Royal Canoe Club, London; the Royal Albert Yacht Club, Southsea; and the Naval and Military Club, London." "There is not," he adds, "the smallest question as to my right to the title of Esq. My

father was Boswell Middleton, Esq., born in Yorkshire. His father was Empson Middleton, Esq., a more or less wealthy landowner in Yorkshire." A further explanation is given in some verses which somebody is said to have written "on seeing Popsy Middleton asleep on board the *Swift* packet on her passage from Falmouth to Barbadoes." One of the verses reads thus :—

> Sleep, and while slumber weighs thine eyelids down,
> May no foul phantom o'er thy pillow frown,
> But brightest visions deck thy tranquil bed,
> And angels' wings o'er-canopy thy head!
> Sleep on, sweet boy; may no dark dreams arise
> To mar thy rosy rest, thou babe of Paradise!

Mr. Middleton had gone to Canterbury to lecture on the shape of the earth, and had there got into a squabble with the proprietor of St. George's Hall. It was out of this squabble that a case arose in the county court. "I would not tolerate," said Mr. Middleton, speaking to the judge, "the proprietor addressing myself in a flippant and democratic manner, and I refuse to tolerate any such address, not only because I am a *bona-fide* gentleman, but because I am a man of exceeding talent—in fact, a very great genius." Nor could he tolerate, as he says in the same pamphlet, "that an under-bred hall-keeper should dictate his slovenly and insulting method of doing business to an exceeding highly

polished and artistic, and also scientific, gentleman; one of the most able racing yachtsmen of England, a classical poet, a geometrician, metaphysician, lecturer, and patentee in yacht and ship building."

Less eccentric, though not less egotistical, than the "babe of Paradise," was another correspondent and lecturer—a clergyman of the Church of England, the Rev. W. D. Ground. While holding a curacy at Newburn-on-Tyne, Mr. Ground, who claimed to be "at least a philosopher," "near akin to a prophet," wrote a book which, besides demolishing the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, ought, he thought, to have been "a passport to a bishopric, not to say the Primacy." It was a great and burning grief to him that he never rose higher in the Church than the vicarages of Alnham and Kirkharle. Once he delivered—this was 1881—a lecture on the "Dynamical Force of Thought, a Newly-Discovered Law of Nature." The new law, he said, which had cost him twenty years to work out, would accomplish "hardly anything less than an intellectual revolution." The philosophy of Herbert Spencer was by common consent one of the greatest systems of thought that had appeared in any age. Yet the lecturer boasted that he had "written papers which, in the judgment of competent men, overthrew it." But "he did not

intend to stop until the system had been battered to pieces and converted into a logical ruin." And when this destructive work had been effected, "he purposed fashioning a system of philosophy of his own." Mr. Ground did not speak without book when he claimed for himself an intellectual superiority even over Shakspeare, for he had put the matter to "veritable scientific proof" in a series of experiments with a borrowed spirometer. "One morning," he said, "he tested the spirometer, which registered 242,244. He then read Act III. in the play of 'Hamlet,' after which he tested the spirometer, which registered 222,213, carrying him down very low indeed. He next read a composition of his own, and then tested the spirometer, which registered 262,253, carrying him, as would be seen, 40 cubic inches." Forty cubic inches higher than Shakspeare! "My own consciousness," innocently observed Mr. Ground, "agreed with this test." Sad to say, the great discoverer of the "dynamical force of thought" died, not a bishop nor a primate, nor even a canon of the Church, but the vicar successively of two remote parishes in Northumberland.[1]

[1] It was this same divine who astonished a diocesan conference in Newcastle by declaring that dynamite and the dagger, in the eyes of the Judge of all the world, were "only an impassioned prayer"!

But a genuine madman was numbered among the correspondents of 1885. There had occurred about twenty years before a horrible murder in the North of England. The victim was a little girl, and the crime was of such a character that nobody but a lunatic could have committed it. The murderer was sentenced to be confined in the criminal asylum at Broadmoor. Thence he wrote a series of astonishing letters. "I am undoubtedly," he declared, "the lawful heir of the present King of Bavaria." But he had received "warnings from Providence of the rancorous opposition of Windsor Castle." In consequence of this opposition, "I have decided upon deposing the present Queen Alexandria Victoria d'Este Guelph, dispossessing her and the rest of the Guelphs of all their riches, except so much as will enable them to live in comfort without luxury." Then he asserted that two of the leading ladies of the operatic stage at that time—Madame Marie Roze and Madame Alwina Valleria—were sisters. For the latter the poor lunatic designed a high distinction. "I have resolved," he wrote, "to get myself and my betrothed wife, Emily Jaques of Osmotherly, commonly known as Alwina Valleria, appointed conjoint and equal King and Queen of Great Britain and Ireland. Emily Jaques shall be wed to me under the same name as she had when we were

betrothed; and the survivors of her former schoolmates and companions will be delighted beyond measure when they learn that the merry, gracious, and amiable little maiden, who in her puce mantle and frock used to diffuse joy and gladness in the upper part of High Felling, has become their Queen. Instead of bearing water-cans balanced on her head, she shall wear her own special tiara and sceptre; and instead of singing for the public in music halls, she shall sing for the private delectation of the most illustrious in the land." A vast deal more of the same inconsequential maundering was written from Broadmoor in 1885 and 1886. And then there was silence—the silence of the grave. The unhappy madman was no more.

CHAPTER LII

POPULAR DEMONSTRATIONS

NEWCASTLE has always done its share, and even more than its share, in the way of popular demonstrations. Every just cause has received its support, and every great patriot has received its homage. To it belongs the honour of being the only town in England to recognise the heroism of Garibaldi after the memorable defence of Rome. Advantage was taken of the visit of the patriot to the Tyne as the captain of a merchant trader to present him with a sword of honour. This event took place in 1854, and the principal part in it was played by Mr. Jos. Cowen, then and always the friend of the struggling and the oppressed. Ten years later, when Garibaldi had achieved his marvellous victories in Sicily and Naples, preparations were made to give him a great public reception in Newcastle.

This second reception of Garibaldi on the Tyne, had it not been frustrated by intrigues and occur-

rences in London, would have been a magnificent affair. No foreigner, save Kossuth, had ever met with heartier or more general acclamations on British soil than the hero of Marsala. It was a popular triumph, spontaneouely offered by the people themselves, that was accorded to the illustrious visitor in Southampton and in the Metropolis. All the other large towns in the country desired to testify in much the same manner their appreciation of the services which Garibaldi had rendered to the cause of liberty. As, however, it was manifestly impossible that the gallant patriot could accept even a tithe of the invitations with which he was overwhelmed, he resolved, out of respect for his old friend Mr. Cowen and out of gratitude for the kindness he had received ten years before, not to disappoint the people of Newcastle. A committee was therefore appointed, with Mr. Cowen as chairman and Mr. Thos. Pringle and myself as secretaries, to make the necessary arrangements. Suddenly, however, it was announced that Garibaldi would almost immediately, without visiting the provinces at all, return to his home in the island of Caprera. The mystery surrounding this startling change in the General's plans has never been fully explained; but there is little doubt now, nor was there much doubt in 1864, that the enthusiasm which had been aroused in this country on

behalf of the liberation of Rome and Venice, coupled with the visit of Garibaldi to his "friend and teacher, Joseph Mazzini," had excited the jealousy and alarm of the Continental despots. To avert complications, the Government of Lord Palmerston appealed to the General to save it from embarrassments by quitting the country. Garibaldi complied; the Governments of Europe were satisfied; and Newcastle was deprived of the opportunity of once more demonstrating its attachment to the cause of the nationalities.[1]

Another famous soldier, from whose progress through the country and popularity with the people no complications were likely to arise, visited Newcastle thirteen years later. Ulysses S. Grant, as

[1] Confirmation of the statements in the text may be found in the "Memoirs of an Ex-Minister." The Ex-Minister was the Earl of Malmesbury, who twice held the seals of the Foreign Office in the Cabinets of Lord Derby. Lord Malmesbury made the following entry in his diary on April 20th, 1864:—"Garibaldi leaves England on Friday. Lord Clarendon, who has just returned from Paris, has informed the Government that the Emperor has made *that* a condition of his joining with us in the conference (Danish-German affairs); and certainly there must be some intrigues, as Mr. Ferguson, the surgeon, writes a letter to the Duke of Sutherland—which is published—saying that it would be dangerous to Garibaldi's health if he exposed himself to the fatigue of an expedition to Manchester, etc. On the other hand, Dr. Basile, Garibaldi's own doctor, says he is perfectly well and able to undergo all the fatigue of a journey to the manufacturing towns. The publication of this letter in contradiction to Mr. Ferguson's must have been done with Garibaldi's consent; it shows he is angry, and does not leave England willingly."

commander-in-chief of the Federal armies, had by his dogged perseverance and masterly combinations done more than any single man save Abraham Lincoln to re-establish the Republic of the United States. Further, he had, as President of the Republic, helped to solve in a peaceful fashion the dangerous difficulty that had arisen between England and America in consequence of the depredations of the *Alabama*. When, therefore, General Grant, taking a tour round the world, came within hail of Newcastle, he was invited to pay it a visit. The American Government was at that time represented in the North of England by a popular and energetic Consul—Major Evan R. Jones, who had himself served through the four years of the Civil War. It was due to the appeal of his old companion in arms that General Grant consented to accept the invitation. The September of 1877 was made memorable by the circumstances and ceremonies of the General's presence. The distinguished stranger was entertained at a banquet, held a reception in the Town Hall, and was presented with an address on the Town Moor. The proceedings on the Town Moor, which were preceded by a procession through the streets, took the form of a demonstration of respect for General Grant and of amity towards the United States. Vast numbers of working men and others,

accompanied by bands and banners, escorted the visitor and his friends to the Moor. There a hustings had been erected, and there in the presence of an enormous and enthusiastic concourse of citizens the General was presented with the address that had been prepared. It was said of some celebrated person that he was silent in six languages. General Grant was silent in one. But another American soldier—General Lucius Fairchild, who had lost an arm in the service of the Republic—made eloquent amends for his comrade's reticence. A few words were all that the conqueror of Donelson and of Vicksburg ever said in public at any one time. Short speeches, however, had to be delivered so often on Tyneside that he expressed his doubt at the banquet whether the people of the United States, when they read the report of the proceedings, would believe that he had ever spoken them!

The demonstration in honour of General Grant had been preceded some years before by demonstrations in favour of political reform. The first of these, organized by Mr. Cowen and the society of which he was the life and spirit, was held on Jan. 29th, 1867. John Bright—or was it Richard Cobden?—had said a few years before, referring to the apathy of the public, that nothing would be done in the way of the further enfranchisement of the people

"till the old men died." The "old men" were those members of the Liberal Party who, like Lord John Russell, considered that the Reform Bill of 1832 was a final measure. Chief of the "old men" was Lord Palmerston. Lord Palmerston died in harness in 1865. Hardly had he been buried before the new men of the Liberal Party justified the prophetic statement. An attempt was made to solve the Reform Question on the old lines of a rating suffrage. The £10 franchise was to be reduced to £5. This was the proposal of the new Government, with Mr. Gladstone at its head. But the scheme was defeated by the narrow majority of five on an amendment proposed by Lord Robert Grosvenor, the author of the Sunday Bill that led to the Hyde Park riots. Back came the Tories to office. The populace was now thoroughly aroused. Imposing demonstrations, unexampled in enthusiasm and in numbers, were one after the other held in all the chief centres of population—Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Newcastle, etc. Many thousands of workmen, preceded by a carriage containing Lord Teynham, the elder Mr. Cowen, and other veterans of the agitation of 1832, marched to the Town Moor, there to show that the demand for political reform could no longer be safely ignored.

These immense demonstrations, not in one part

of the country, but in all, convinced even the Tories that something would have to be done now. Mr. Disraeli, leader of the House of Commons at last, was the first to see it. There would have to be a Reform Bill of some sort. But of what sort? The imagination of Mr. Disraeli, always equal to the demands upon it, was not at fault in the existing emergency. It occurred to him that the old Whig method of taking a few pounds off the rental qualification was humdrum, commonplace, lacking in ingenuity and statecraft. The Tories must go further —down to the bed-rock of the household. There was no principle in a pound more or less; there was, however, a clear and captivating principle in declaring that every householder was entitled to the suffrage. So he set himself to "educate his party." "Household suffrage! Good heavens! was the man mad?" Yes, but he would surround it with restrictions and hindrances, checks and counterpoises. And then, see how the principle would enchant the multitude! The Tory party yielded—not, however, without a good deal of squirming. Honest old Tories, too, saw that they were going to take "a leap in the dark." But as they had to take a leap somewhere—well, they would just have to follow their leader. Besides, there was, as Lord Derby, the old Rupert of Debate, said, the tempta-

tion of "dishing the Whigs." Again, was it not possible, if you dug down deep enough, that you would come even among the masses upon a substratum of Toryism—the Tory Democracy about which Mr. Disraeli had written in his early novels? It is certain at any rate that the Whigs were "dished."

When Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill was produced in 1867, it was received with amusement tinctured with disdain on the part of the Opposition, with surprise tinctured with doubt on the part of the supporters of the Government. The whole thing, said the Liberals, was a sham. It pretended to accede to the popular wishes, but in reality frustrated them. Mr. Disraeli was not a statesman, but a juggler. His scheme was both a delusion and a snare. What he offered the country was a feast of Dead Sea apples—fair to look upon, but ashes in the mouth. Mr. Bright riddled and ridiculed what he called the "fancy franchises," as indeed they were. There was, it was contended by the chiefs of the Opposition, only one course to pursue with this preposterous measure, and that was to reject it with scorn and contumely. But certain Radicals in the House were wiser than their leaders. The elder Mr. Cowen, who was by this time one of the members for Newcastle, was prominent among

the Radicals. They met in the Tea Room of the House of Commons. And the conclusion they came to was that the principle of the Bill was worth accepting. As for the restrictions and counterpoises, they could be modified or even swept away afterwards. The Tea Room party settled the fate of the measure. The action of the little party settled more than the fate of Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill—it practically settled the Reform Question itself from that time to our own.

But there were earnest men in the North who were not satisfied even with an unadulterated Household Suffrage Bill. They held to the old doctrine of Manhood Suffrage. So another demonstration was promoted—the last of its kind, but the greatest. Again were Mr. Cowen's superb powers of organization brought into play. The trades unions mustered as before with their banners and insignia. But the most numerous and the most imposing part of the procession was composed of miners from all parts of Northumberland and Durham. Fifty thousand of these hardy sons of toil, each colliery with its band and its banner, marched into Newcastle on that memorable day—April 12th, 1873. Accurate and exhaustive returns showed that at least 80,000 persons took part in the splendid array, while it was computed that from first to last fully 200,000

must have followed the appointed speakers to the Town Moor. Almost every railway in England and Scotland was laid under contribution for carriages and conveyances. The North-Eastern Company alone borrowed 550 carriages, equal to 60 ordinary trains. Between 80 and 90 bands of music accompanied the procession, and upwards of 150 banners and flags, most of them of a costly and beautiful description, beside bannerettes, emblems, and devices of every conceivable kind, were carried with the different contingents. The whole procession, walking four deep and in quick order, took exactly two hours and twenty-five minutes in marching past. The length of it could not be measured, for the proceedings at the six platforms on the Moor, although they lasted an hour and a half, were entirely concluded when the first part of the last section of demonstrators appeared in sight of the people on the hustings.

Never before had so many orderly men paraded the streets of Newcastle. It was a spectacle that brought tears to the eyes. The writer marched with the miners, whom he best knew, for he had been much among them when lecturing in the colliery villages on the subject of American slavery and the American war. Many and fervent were the ejaculations of pride and encouragement from the spectators

as the magnificent procession tramped through miles of streets towards the trysting place. But there were other ejaculations too. Mr. Cowen was at that time idolised by the people, but cordially disliked by the caddish section of society. As he walked with his friends at the front of the procession, a tradesman in Grey Street expressed the friendly hope that the demonstrators when they reached the Moor would hang him from one of the platforms! It was an evidence of the intense feeling of resentment that had taken possession of the privileged classes and their supporters.

As I have said, this was the last of the great demonstrations. It was, too, as I have also said, the greatest. Whether because the people are satisfied with the measure of liberty since enjoyed, or because they are now much more interested in other things than politics, it is certain that the lethargy which Mr. Bright lamented in 1864 has once more spread over England.

CHAPTER LIII

"THE MORPETH HUBBUBBOO"

THE expectations of the Tea Room party that the hindrances to emancipation contained in Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill could and would be removed were in due course completely realised. The credit of removing such of them as related to the residents of colliery villages and the occupants of colliery houses belongs to the miners of Northumberland. How this came about forms an interesting episode in the history of the borough of Morpeth.

The secretary of the Northumberland Miners' Association, Thomas Burt, soon after his election to that office in 1864, showed so much ability in the management of the society's affairs, and endeared himself so much to his fellow-workmen by reason of his personal qualities, that there arose a strong desire to see him in the House of Commons. But household suffrage, pure and simple, was not yet the law of the land. Of the thousands of miners in Northumberland only a few hundreds were numbered among the electors of the county. As occupiers of

colliery houses, and so not paying rates directly to the overseers of the poor, they were considered not entitled to have their names inscribed on the rate-books or on the register of voters. But some ingenious people in the neighbourhood of Choppington and Bedlington conceived the idea that the occupants of colliery houses, since they stood in respect to rates in about the same position as compound householders in towns, had equal claims with the said householders to the suffrage. To press this idea upon the authorities the Miners' Franchise Association was formed in the early part of 1872.

The inception of the movement, undoubtedly one of the most successful ever set on foot in the North of England, was due, I think, to Thomas Glassey, then a miner at Choppington, but for some years now a leading member of the Parliament of Queensland, and at this date a member of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia. Mr. Glassey, a native of the North of Ireland, had not been long in the district, nor had he always been associated with the Radical party. Indeed, he had until shortly before been a rampant Orangeman. When he did take sides with the Radicals, however, he went with them heart and soul. Being a man of resource, too, he soon made the whole coalfield ring with the claims of the miners. Associated with Mr. Glassey

were two other notable men. One was Robert Elliott, author of a vernacular poem which created some stir at the time, entitled "A Pitman Gan te Parliament." It was thought by many of his friends that justice was hardly done to his services and abilities when he failed to secure the nomination for a neighbouring constituency to Morpeth. The other member of the triumvirate was Dr. James Trotter, one of four or five brothers, natives of Galloway, all pursuing the practice of medicine at the same time in Northumberland. James was also an Orangeman at the beginning of his public career. Like Glassey, moreover, he threw himself with ardour and enthusiasm into the Radical movement.

The Franchise Association aimed at two things—the extension of the suffrage to all householders in the villages included in the borough of Morpeth, and the return of Thomas Burt as the first working-man member of the House of Commons. Both objects were achieved, but not before the district had become the scene of exciting events. Once, when Mr. Walter B. Trevelyan, the revising barrister, sitting at Morpeth, gave a decision hostile to the claims of the association, Mr. Glassey, rising in great wrath, called all his friends outside the court. It seemed as if a revolution was going to begin there and then. I recollect assisting to throw oil on the troubled

waters, with the result that the standard of rebellion was neither then nor later unfurled. Greater still was the excitement when a poem entitled "The Morpeth Hubbubboo" made its appearance. The name of no author was attached to the piece, nor did anybody at the time know whence it had emanated; but it was supposed to represent the feelings of the tradesmen and respectable classes of Morpeth. As the verses have become historical, I give some of them here:—

Come, all ye jolly freemen,
And listen to my tale,
How Morpeth served the Howkies,
And made them turn their tail.
And you, ye Howky beggars,
We dare you to come down!
And though you come in thousands,
We'll kick you from the town.
You dirty sneaking cowards,
Come back to Morpeth, do,
And we'll kick your Burt to blazes,
And stop your Hubbubboo.

The rascals, how they spouted
On sham gentility,
And swore the dirty Howkies
Were just as good as we.
They wanted rights of voting,
The law had ordered so:
What right to Rights have Howkies
Is what I'd like to know.
We'll let them drink our beer, sir,
The worst that we can brew,
It's good enough for Howkies
To raise a Hubbubboo.

Hurrah for Champion Robberts
That damned the Howky dirt,
The boy that thrashed the traitors
Who wished to vote for Burt,
That stood up for Sir Georgy,
And cursed the Howkies well,
And damned them and the Trotters
To trot right off to hell!
He showed them like a man, sir,
What brandy schnapps can do,
And soon smashed up the Templars,
And spoiled the Hubbubboo.

Nine groans for both the Trotters,
Confound the ugly quacks;
When next they show their faces,
We'll make them show their backs.
Nine groans for Irish Glassey;
If he comes here again,
We'll pelt him out with murphies,
And get the rascal slain.
Nine groans for Poet Elliott
And his North-Country crew,
Aud ninety for the Howkies
That raised the Hubbubboo.

Nine groans for Burt the Howky;
And if he ventures here,
His dry teetotal carcase
We'll soak in Robberts' beer.
We'll put him in the stocks, too,
And pelt him well with eggs;
We'll black his Howky eyes, boys,
And kick his bandy legs.
He would unseat Sir Georgy,
He would be member, too;
We'll hunt him out of Morpeth,
And spoil his Hubbubboo.

The effect of the publication was instantaneous.

Not only did the pitmen round about refuse to enter a public-house where "Robberts' beer" was sold, but the pitmen's wives drove back home the tradesmen's carts that travelled round the pit villages laden with provisions. Dr. Trotter himself described the state of affairs in a letter I received from him a few days after the appearance of the "Hubbubboo." It will be seen that the letter was partly in reply to a suggestion of mine that nothing foolish or indiscreet should be done to bring discredit upon the movement. Here, then, is Dr. Trotter's account of matters:—

BEDLINGTON, THURSDAY.

My dear Sir,—The whole district is in a blaze. The tradesmen of Morpeth are like to be ruined.

A great meeting was held at Morpeth, on Tuesday night, to take the crisis into serious consideration. A reward of £150 is offered by the tradesmen for the publishers and authors of the squibs which are setting the miners into so desperate a state of excitement.

All the inns and beer-shops in the district have orders to receive no more ale or spirits from Morpeth on pain of instant extinction, and all here have complied with the demand. The pitmen made an entrance into every public-house, took down all the Morpeth spirit advertisements framed on the walls, trampled them under foot, and sent the fragments to the owners carefully packed and labelled.

You can have no idea of the sensation here at present. It is to be proposed, and has every likelihood of being

carried unanimously, that Choppington pits be at once laid idle should a single tubful of coals be sent to the town of Morpeth, and every colliery in the county is to be invited to join issue to the same effect. So you see that Morpeth people will not only be starved as regards food, but as respects fuel also, if things go on at this rate much longer.

I believe we could have 10,000 men into Morpeth at a week's notice. However, I will follow your advice in the matter and keep things as quiet as possible; but if the men get determined, the devil himself will hardly be able to prevent them making an inroad.

I will excuse our deputation to the collieries to which we were invited as you suggest. Besides, Mr. Burt will as surely be M.P. for the borough of Morpeth as that I am

Very sincerely yours,
JAMES TROTTER.

The shopkeepers of Morpeth were indeed in serious straits. In this extremity they got up a meeting to repudiate the "Hubbubboo." Peace, however, was not restored till the Franchise Association was invited to hold a conference in the sacred precincts of the borough itself. It was suspected at the time, though it was not positively known till long afterwards, that the poem which set the district on fire was the production, not of an enemy, but of a friend. Things were getting dull, it was thought, and so it was deemed advisable to invent something that would fan the embers of the agitation into a

blaze. And the blaze produced then has certainly never in the same district been equalled since. Dr. Trotter was fond of practical jokes, and the "Hubbubboo" was one of them [1]—quite of a piece with another which set the inhabitants of his own town of Dalry by the ears. The "Clachan Fair," a long descriptive poem, satirising everybody in the place, including the author's father, was printed and posted to persons concerned. And then the incorrigible joker took a holiday, and went back to his old home to enjoy the fun!

The franchise movement never flagged after the excitement about the "Hubbubboo." It even attracted attention in distant parts of the country. Archibald Forbes, in an interval of his war reporting, was sent down to describe for the *Daily News* the position of matters in the North. Writing of a "Miners' Monstre Demonstration," held at Morpeth on Sept. 28th, 1872, he fell into a curious confusion in respect to a leading spirit of the movement, assigning to him the name of the colliery village in which he resided. One of the speakers at the meeting, said Mr. Forbes, was "an Irish pitman, Thomas Glassey, known to fame as the Choppington

[1] Mr. Elliott thinks I am wrong in this statement. The "Hubbubboo," he says, was the production of Dr. Robert Trotter, then of Choppington, but now of Perth, the author of "Galloway Gossip" and a host of other things.

Guide Post"—"a fine, ardent young fellow, with yellow hair, and a brogue broader than the platform. And then," he added, "Mr. Glassey lapsed into revolutionary utterances, and began to talk about tyrants and despots and other matters of a like sort, which seemed to indicate him as rather an unsafe guide post for Choppington or any other loyal community." But the upshot of the whole business was that the revising barrister, when he came his rounds in 1873, admitted the whole of the pitman claimants to the franchise, thus increasing the constituency of Morpeth at one bound from 2,661 to 4,916.

The rest was easy. Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary in many successive Whig Ministries, who had represented Morpeth since 1852, retired into private life. Mr. Cowen presided over a great meeting at Bedlington Cross on Oct. 18th, 1873, at which a requisition was presented to Mr. Burt inviting him to stand as a candidate for the borough. The invitation was of course accepted. A committee constituted as follows was chosen to conduct the election:—Robert Elliott, chairman; Thomas Glassey, vice-chairman; James Archbold, treasurer; James Trotter, secretary; general members—Joseph Cowen, M.P., the Rev. Dr. Rutherford, George Howard (now Earl of Carlisle), W. E. Adams, Matthew

Pletts, and Ralph Young. Although the return of Mr. Burt by an overwhelming majority was absolutely certain, a rival candidate was found in Captain Francis Duncan, who, as Colonel Duncan, the author of a "History of the Royal Artillery," rose to distinction both in Parliament and in the military service, and died later while serving his country in Egypt. The contest which followed was unique.

Captain Duncan was everywhere respectfully received by the miners. When he addressed a meeting at Choppington, not a murmur of opposition was heard from the crowded audience; but when a vote of approval of his candidature was proposed, every hand was held up against it. And the proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to Captain Duncan for his lecture! Both candidates on the day of the polling visited the different towns and villages comprising the constituency of Morpeth. Mr. Burt's tour was a triumphal procession. The arrival of the candidate and his friends at Bedlington, I recollect, led to an extraordinary scene. The main street of the town was crowded, for of course the pits were all idle. First there was much cheering; then arose an irrepressible desire to do something unusual. The horses were taken out of the conveyance, dozens of stalwart miners seized the shafts, and the electoral party was rushed up and

down the thoroughfare at a furious and hazardous pace amidst the wildest excitement. It was even proposed to run the carriage all the way to Morpeth: nor was it without some difficulty that the jubilant crowd was dissuaded from its purpose. Not less astonishing was the reception accorded to Mr. Burt at Morpeth itself, where both candidates—such was the friendly character of the contest—addressed the multitude, which literally filled the Market Place, from the same platform and from the windows of each other's committee rooms!

The ballot box revealed the fact, or rather emphasised the fact, that the old order had indeed changed. The miners' candidate had received 3,332 votes as against his opponent's 585. So was Thomas Burt returned the first veritable working man that had ever entered the House of Commons.[1]

[1] Mr. Burt often afterwards dined at the same table as Mr. Gladstone—often, therefore, heard the great statesman tell interesting stories. Here is one that I have not seen in print before. An old admiral lay on his death bed. The fact did not seem to concern him. So the clergyman of the parish endeavoured to prepare his mind for the impending change. The dying man was reminded of the privileges that belonged to the household of faith. Wonderful was the happiness that awaited the repentant and believing spirit. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the glories of the realms above. "Aye, aye," piped the old salt, "it may be as you say,—but," feebly waving his nightcap around his head, "Ould England for me! Ould England for me!"

CHAPTER LIV

THE LAWS OF THE WORKSHOP

WORKMEN, now that they make their own laws, have the power to make the workshop a place of pleasure or a place of torment. It is to be feared that the policy of modern days is calculated to bring about the latter result. And the reason for this policy is the false and wrong-headed conception that all labour is degrading, to which there has latterly been added the equally false and wrong-headed doctrine that the less the labourer produces the more the labourer will profit.

The fundamental error of the workman lies in disparaging his own calling. He should leave disparagement to snobs and idlers and loafers—to those slugs and scums of the earth who have never done an honest day's toil in their lives. If work is degrading, how, then, about the workman? As one cannot touch pitch without being defiled, so one cannot do a degrading thing without being degraded oneself. To this complexion the modern

doctrine must bring the whole working world at last. A leader of the new school—he was a member of Parliament, too, at the time—once advised the blastfurnacemen of Cleveland to do as little work as possible, adding that he himself never did any work at all if he could help it! French adherents of the same school have gone even further. The ideal of one of them—M. Jules Guesde, a member of the Chamber of Deputies—was, as I recollect writing in 1892, not so much a "fool's paradise" as a "pig's paradise." But a comrade of his—M. Godefroy, described as "an anarchist of local celebrity in one of the lower quarters of Paris," that same year put the doctrine into practice in a singularly audacious way. M. Godefroy, so it was recorded at the time, went into a fashionable restaurant, ordered a sumptuous repast, consumed all the luxuries that were placed before him, and then refused to pay the bill. He had no money, he said, because he did no work, and he did no work because work was degrading!

The older and infinitely better conception was comprised in the desire to elevate labour, and so elevate the labourer. "Work is worship." Never was truer aphorism put into words. Work has redeemed the world. It is the salvation of man: for those who don't work die of weariness or

debauchery. Every great thinker has acclaimed the old doctrine—none more powerfully than Thomas Carlyle. "For," says he, "there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works : in idleness alone is there perpetual despair." Again, "Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessing." And again, "All true Work is sacred ; in all true Work, were it but true hand-labour, there is something of divineness. Labour, wide as the earth, has its summit in heaven. Sweat of the brow ; and up from that to sweat of the brain, sweat of the heart ; which includes all Kepler calculations, Newton meditations, all Sciences, all spoken Epics, all acted Heroisms."

But Carlyle has preached in vain ; for a canker is eating into the very soul of the worker. "Ca' canny" is an ugly term ; but it is not nearly so ugly, so ineffably repulsive, as the policy it represents —a "policy of skulk," a policy of demanding a good day's wage and doing in return for it a bad day's work. And yet it is a policy that received in 1896 the open approval of certain prominent leaders connected with the International Federation of Ship and Dock Workers—not Dock Workers, but Dock Skulkers, if the policy were carried out.

Everybody can understand what happens when workmen demand higher wages; everybody can understand, and even appreciate, what happens when the workmen enter upon a strike to enforce their demands; but what cannot be understood, what certainly cannot be appreciated, is a course of procedure which, if persistently and successfully pursued, must inevitably end in the utter demoralization of the artizan classes. Honesty, according to the new doctrine, is *not* the best policy. Trick, deceit, sloth—these are to take the place of industry, integrity, and honour. Such a scheme of behaviour would have surprised most people if it had been proclaimed by men of the gutter. That it should have been advocated by persons in the position of leaders of workmen was simply astounding. The mere fact that the base proceeding should have even been discussed gave the world a shock.

Consider for a moment. If dishonesty be good for ship and dock workers, it must be good for all other workers. And what then? Bad workmanship will be the order of the day. Our ships will be made, not to swim, but to sink; our houses, not to stand, but to fall; our clothes, not to wear, but to wear out. And who will fare worst from the general collapse of things—who but the sailors who go to sea in the rotten ships the

labourers who live in the jerry houses, the poor who buy the shoddy clothes? Dreadful calamities have happened often enough from criminal negligence and botchery—the bad workmanship put into ships, into bridges, into dwelling-houses, into public buildings. I write as a victim; for my health was permanently injured, and my life was nearly lost, through the conduct of workmen who deliberately mislaid the drains in a new house. And the terrible catastrophe that befell the Forth Bridge and the train that was crossing it in a storm was presumably due to the faulty castings that were used in the structure.

Our workmen are yet too honest, too proud of their skill, too mindful of their character and reputation, to sanction the disgraceful policy of skulk. Out upon the evil counsellers who persuade them to dishonour themselves! But ominous reports are current that the odious system is creeping, or has crept, into the laws of the workshop; that workmen who do their best, if that best is better than the restrictions laid down allow, are penalised, worried, and assaulted; and that agents and spies are appointed to watch that the restrictive rules are not infringed. Fancy the shame and degradation of being obliged to refrain from doing an honest day's work! The effect is disastrous, not only

to the character, but to the comfort of the workman. The labour problem will never be really solved till means have been found to make every man feel an affection for his work and a desire to excel in it. "A man's joy in his work," the late Mr. Cowen once wrote, "is the best of all human feelings and the greatest of all human pleasures." The great aim ought, then, to be the realisation of a state of industry in which men will pursue their callings with the same love and the same ardour as they pursue their hobbies and amusements. Secure such a condition of industry as this, and you make the world happier than it has ever been before—happier than it ever can be in other and differing circumstances. The policy of the workers, or of some of them, is to get themselves regarded as so many machines. There is no policy more calculated to make the working life of mankind unendurable. "A man can do his best thing easiest," says Emerson. And when he is doing his best he is happy. The happiest time is the busiest time (so long as the worker is not overwrought), whether in factory, field, or office. It is the idler and the loafer who find the hours drag heavily. To ordain idling and loafing, therefore, is to ensure that the workman's life shall be dreary and miserable. But human nature itself

will revolt against the general application of so tyrannous a practice—unless, indeed, the British workman should become a mere slave to his own agent, the petty despot of the workshop.

The doing of less than they can do, less than they ought to do, and less than they contracted to do, was a ground of just complaint against the men who were employed to plant some of the belts of trees that surround the Town Moor of Newcastle. There was a great stagnation of trade during the winters of 1892-93 and 93-94. To relieve the distress the Town Council resolved to provide work in the shape of trenching the ground for the trees. The work was satisfactorily done the first winter. But before the second winter came round the ca' canny cancer had eaten its way into the conduct of the suffering people. The annual report of the City Engineer, dated March 25, 1894, contained this significant passage :—"The result of the efforts made to provide work for the unemployed during the last winter have not been encouraging. The work has cost more than double what similar work, done under the same conditions and the same supervision, cost the year before." What was done for 2½*d.* one year cost 6½*d.* the next! The loss was the town's, but the benefit was nobody's. The loss was the workman's too, since he lost his character for honesty.

Curious reasons—sometimes silly and sometimes tyrannical—are occasionally given for strikes. Miners at one colliery struck because the management had discharged men for dishonest practices; those at a second because the management had closed a pit which had ceased to pay; those at a third because some of their fellows were not in the union. This latter form of strike, common in all trades of late years, is symptomatic of the growth of arrogance and despotism in the workshop. And in some trades the employers are compelled to carry out the unlawful and unwarrantable behests of the employed. Was ever position so humiliating? I remember how we old Radicals fought tooth and nail against employers who denied to their workmen the right of combination. It is the right to abstain from combining that is now denied. Moreover, if workmen insist upon exercising that right, they are expelled from the workshop altogether. This is the new unionism as once expounded in a document circulated in Tyneside factories:—"The non-unionist should be treated as a social leper, avoided as the plague." But the old unionism as expounded by Thomas Burt was this:—"While asserting and resolutely maintaining our own rights and liberties, we should respect the rights and liberties of others." Those who fought against the tyranny of capital, not because

it was capital, but because it was tyranny, have now to fight against the tyranny of labour, not because it is labour, but because it also is tyranny. But Abraham Lincoln was right: —"Men who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and under a just God cannot long retain it."

The laws of the workshop sometimes help to make the worker's life a burden. They do so, I think (for I have had personal experience of both systems), when they insist on time-work instead of piece-work. Drearily drag the hours in the one case, but rapidly and happily they pass in the other. As Earl Grey once said, "the man who takes no interest in his work is apt to become morose, peevish, and discontented—a pest to the society in which he lives, and a sort of human mosquito, carrying a microbe which spreads the malaria of unhappiness." Not less effective in the same direction is the system of castes which the laws of the workshop are establishing. The dominant idea of working men, or rather of working men's societies, is that nobody should be allowed to do anything outside his own trade. Once a scavenger always a scavenger. "A man," says Emerson, "should not be a silkworm, nor a nation a tent of caterpillars." Yet, under the new caste system, men and women will be reduced to the condition, not so much of spiders and ants, as of

slugs and worms. The life of the wretched exiles in Siberian mines is scarcely more weary, monotonous, and despairing than that to which some of our modern trades unionists would condemn all mankind. Without hopes, aspirations, or even the desire for anything better, our workmen will have to drag out their lives in rounds as dismal as a horse in a grinding-mill, or a squirrel in a cage, or a criminal on the tread-wheel. But Englishmen will never consent to become or remain mere cogs in a machine. The attempt to make them or keep them in that condition, however, may bring infinite mischief—such mischief as will inevitably result from the elimination of character and spirit from even a small section of the working classes.

Workmen are now invested with so vast a power that they can, if they will, reform and renovate the world. But first they must set their faces against practices in the workshop that are a disgrace to all concerned. Men are often so much like monkeys and school-boys that they find pleasure in tormenting and ill-using each other. These petty tyrannies, rendering existence intolerable in the case of victims who are capable of defending themselves, are mean and contemptible in the case of helpless and inoffensive companions. I know of a poor half-wit in a London workshop who seldom

comes home without some tale of outrage done to him. Once he was smothered with lime which nearly cost him his eyesight. The men who do these things are scoundrels, and the men who permit them to be done are cowards. If workmen would exercise a moral censorship—send sots to Coventry and wife-beaters out of the pale—they would do more than has ever yet been done to purge and elevate society.

And now I will finish with a story. A great strike for an advance of wages was in progress in one of our chief coal-fields. It had been raging for fourteen or fifteen weeks, and nearly a quarter of a million men were still idle, their families of course being in dire distress. The Government of the day (Mr. Gladstone's Government), desiring to end the disastrous strife, commissioned a discreet person to sound the president of the union as to the willingness of the miners' leaders to meet Lord Rosebery and the coalowners to discuss terms of settlement. The president had gone to bed when the discreet person reached the headquarters of the society on Saturday night. Next morning the president was interviewed. "No, sir," said he, "I won't talk about it. I'm a member of the Lord's Day Observance Society. Do you think I'm to be bothered about worldly affairs on the Sabbath?"

But the discreet person had already seen the other officers of the society—the vice-president and secretary—and had obtained their assent. So a conference was held, which resulted in an agreement to pay the old rate of wages for a time, and then refer all matters in dispute to a Board of Conciliation. Whereupon the miners' delegates passed resolutions congratulating the president on the victory he had won! Lord Rosebery, then Foreign Minister, delighted with the story of the Sabbath, said to Sir William Harcourt, then Home Secretary: "Splendid fellow that! Wish I had him in my department."

CHAPTER LV

DYNAMITE AND DAGGER

MICHAEL BAKUNIN, the Russian giant whom I saw at the funeral of Dr. Bernard after his escape from Siberia, is accorded the credit of having inspired the Anarchist movement. Proudhon had been before him in teaching the doctrine that "property is robbery," and Blanqui had been before him in fighting and conspiring against society. But Bakunin had more to do than either with fomenting an agitation that has resulted in incredible crimes. "Neither God nor master," was one of Bakunin's mottoes; "destruction for destruction's sake," was another. From this horrible teaching, and the evil spirit it evoked, there have issued such a series of assassinations and murders as have appalled the world.

It was not, however, till after Bakunin's death that anarchism was scientifically formulated. This was done at a conference held in Berne in 1876. The propositions then adopted, partly positive and

partly negative, cleared the ground of all possible misconception as to the meaning of the Anarchists. The negative doctrine was thus set forth :—

All things are at an end.

There is an end to property. War to the knife against capital, against every description of privilege, and against the exploitation of one man by another.

There is an end to all distinctions of country. There shall be no such thing as frontiers or international conflicts.

There is an end of the State. Every form of authority, elected or not, dynastic or parliamentary, shall go by the board.

Equally precise and unmistakable was the affirmative part of the doctrine :—

The social revolution, if it is to escape being a fresh exploitation of the individual, must have no other aim than to create a community in which the individual shall enjoy absolute independence, obeying simply and solely the behests of his own will, and fettered by no obligations imposed upon him by the will of his neighbour; for any restraint of this latter description would undermine the very foundations of the system. Hence are deduced the two propositions which comprise the whole positive creed of the Anarchist—

1. Do what you choose.

2. Everything is everybody's; that is to say, the entire wealth of the community is there for each individual to take from it what he requires.

Even before the tenets of the Anarchist had been put into formal and precise language, as if the authors were stating a mathematical proposition, they had been practised and exemplified by the Paris Commune. The Communards, when they were at last defeated, destroyed for the sake of destroying. It was well for Paris that they had at their command petroleum instead of dynamite. Dynamite was a later weapon that was employed with deadly and dastardly effect by the furies of another race. There was perhaps some excuse for the Communards, who were caught like rats in a trap, and who fought like rats in a pit. Despair and madness accounted for the flames with which the desperate and maddened insurgents endeavoured to reduce Paris to ashes. It may, however, be doubted whether any similar excuse can be urged for miscreants who, beginning with the dagger, calmly planned and executed the most villainous and yet most useless outrages.

Broken down in health, in consequence of the criminal negligence, or rather the deliberate rascality, of certain workmen who had prepared a death trap for the first occupants of a new house, I was in the spring of 1882 on my way to America to recruit. Our ship was the *Germanic*, one of the fleet of the White Star Line. We were nearing New York in a dense fog, with icebergs round about us. The situa-

tion was unpleasant, but perhaps not unusual on Atlantic liners. Nevertheless, we landsmen were greatly relieved when the yellow sails of a pilot boat were seen looming though the mist. A few minutes more and the pilot was on board. Almost instantly the whole ship's company—officers, crew, and passengers—was in a state of commotion. The pilot had brought copies of the latest papers, and these papers contained particulars of the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish in Phœnix Park. The crime had been committed more than a week before—the day after we had left Liverpool. It was the one subject of excited conversation on board the *Germanic*, among Britons and Americans alike, till our ship was moored at the landing stage.

The murder of Lord Frederick and his companion, who were cut to pieces with knives in broad daylight and in a public park, was the beginning of a series of even more diabolical and purposeless atrocities. The Fenians who did these things, many of whom came from America to do them, had probably not needed the incitements of Anarchist apostles to initiate a propaganda of bloodshed. But they preached and put into operation the same ferocious doctrines. The midnight use of torch and dagger in England was openly and almost incessantly advocated in New York and other cities of the

United States from 1881 onwards. The mysterious sinking of the British ship *Doterel* with the loss of all on board was claimed as a triumph for the dynamite party. "It is the duty of every Irish citizen," cried an Irish orator in 1883, "to kill the representatives of England wherever found. The holiest incense to Heaven would be the smoke of burning London." Emergency Clubs and Crusader Clubs were established to wreck and ruin England. One of these took the name of one of the murderers of Lord Frederick Cavendish—the Joe Brady Emergency Club. A meeting of the members was held in March, 1884, whereat Frank Byrne, who had been concerned in the Phœnix Park crime, but who then ran a liquor saloon in New York, advised the general use of "dynamite, the torch, and the knife."

But the great fire-eater of the day was Jeremiah O'Donovan, otherwise known as O'Donovan Rossa. The Americans called him a blatherskite, but he called himself a madman. "I am not a fool," said he at a meeting in Columbia Hall, Brooklyn, on Dec. 30, 1883; "I am not a fool, but I admit I am a madman." Rossa published a paper called the *United Irishman*. This paper announced that a "verdict of murder" had been returned against Mr. Gladstone, and that "four Irishmen had volunteered to carry out the verdict."

Gladstone was doomed, but London was doomed also. "The wrongs and injuries of seven centuries of oppression," it was declared, "may yet be avenged by the conflagration of London. It has been repeatedly asserted that London is perfectly combustible. It is built of such wretched materials, and contains such mountains of coal, wood, cotton, and cloth, such oceans of spirituous liquors, such immeasurable quantities of inflammable materials, that the Irish inhabitants might easily wrap London in crimson conflagration. Not London alone. Liverpool might blaze like another Moscow, or Manchester redden the midnight skies like another Chicago." Rossa was for practical work, he said at the Brooklyn meeting :—"I go in for dynamite. Tear down English cities ; kill the English people. To kill and massacre and pillage is justifiable in the eyes of God and man." One need not, after this, contest the accuracy of Rossa's description of himself.

Yet there were other madmen in the field then—three at least. One was Robert Blissert, another William Bourke, the third Professor Mezeroff, "the dynamite apostle." Mr. Blissert declared that it would be "an act of humanity to lay all England in ashes." Mr. Bourke was a little more particular. "Scientists teach us," he said, "that gunpowder will blow a man up at the rate of 6,000 miles

a minute; but, thank Heaven, these same scientists have given us dynamite, which would send the city of London—yes, all England—flying at the rate of 73,000 miles a minute. If we educate a thousand men in the science of chemistry, they can blow every city in England four miles above heaven in less than six months." It was to teach them chemistry that Professor Mezeroff (apparently an Irishman with a Russian name) desired to set about establishing dynamite schools—a dynamite school in every ward of New York. Bourke asked for a thousand men. Mezeroff thought a tenth of that number would do. "One hundred men educated in scientific warfare," he proudly proclaimed, "could lay every town and city in England in ashes."

Madness was in the air in the eighties and far into the nineties. Nor was it confined to one country or one race. It was rampant in England as much as in America, and in France and Spain as much as in either. There were German madmen, English madmen, French madmen—all thirsting for blood, like so many ghouls or vampires. Johann Most, who, like Bakunin, wished to "destroy everything," advised every labourer to select a victim:—"He will seek him at his house, in his office, in his factory, at the counter, at the store, or in the church. Then he will bludgeon him, or stab him, or poison him."

The German was not more sanguinary than the English Anarchist. "If," said Mr. Champion, "I thought the miserable system under which we live could be done away with by cutting the throats of the million and a quarter of people who hold among them three-fourths of the wealth of England, I would do it with my own hand this minute." Even the champion pig-killer of Chicago could hardly with his own hand cut a million and a quarter of throats in a minute; but this was a difficulty that did not occur to the English Anarchist. Champion, however, was scarcely more bloodthirsty than some of his comrades. One Nicoll, representing the "Commonweal Group," declared that all means were lawful to the Anarchist, "whether the knife, the pistol, or the running noose," and that everything that stood in his way was to be destroyed, "from God to the meanest policeman." During a time of distress in 1894, one Williams, an organizer of the Social Democratic Federation, set himself to incite the suffering people of London to violence and outrage. "The unemployed," he said, "were morally justified in helping themselves to the accumulations of wealth created by their own toil." And the police who interfered with them should be "sent to heaven by chemical parcels post." Quite a facetious person, Mr.

Williams! "With a piece of explosive the size of a penny, which could be carried in the pocket," he added, "the whole of two lines of police could be removed." And a comrade of Williams's said he was prepared to start at once the pulling down and burning business. Compared with these ferocious sentiments, the advice of one Shaw Maxwell, who came down from London to suggest that the unemployed people of Newcastle should "sack the bakers' shops," was commendable for its moderation. The French Anarchists were not behind the rest in truculence. The massacre of the bourgeoisie was openly advocated in Paris in 1884; Citizen Eudes, a general of the Communards, lamented that the Commune had not "slaughtered, burned, and destroyed to the end"; and Louise Michel, the crazy Frenchwoman whom the Anarchists thought inspired, exultantly exclaimed in 1886, when a Socialist mob had robbed the jewellers' shops in Pall Mall, that "the English people were at last aroused, and would choke the Thames with the corpses of the capitalists."

But Anarchism did not confine itself to threats. Diabolical outrages were of frequent occurrence from 1890 to 1894—now in France, then in Italy, anon in Spain. Ravachol, a low thief and murderer before he became an Anarchist, startled the world

with a fiendish crime. Worse atrocities followed. Auguste Vaillant, a gaol-bird and the companion of thieves and burglars, threw a bomb into the midst of the Chamber of Deputies of France, causing terrible injuries; Emile Henri, selecting the happiest crowd he could find, did the like in a Paris restaurant; and Salvador Franch, who seems to have never done an honest day's work in his life, exploded an infernal machine in a crowded opera-house at Barcelona, killing twenty-three innocent people and wounding twice as many more. And the deeds of these demons were hailed with acclamations in the Anarchist circles of London. "If," said one Turner at a meeting in Wardour Street, "if the working classes were to do any good for themselves, they must do as Ravachol did." H. B. Samuels, the editor of a bloodthirsty print called the *Commonweal*, declared at a meeting in the Grafton Hall, Fitzroy Square, that "their comrade in Barcelona had done a great and good act." Writing later of the same event in his own publication, he expressed the pleasure he felt "because of the death of thirty rich people and the injury of eighty others"! The Anarchists had other heroes besides Ravachol and Franch. One was Hermann Stellmacher. This man was executed in Austria for the murder of a policeman. But he had been

guilty of still more despicable crimes. Two men, one evening in January, 1883, entered the office of a money-changer named Eisert, situated in a principal street of Vienna. Herr Eisert was first blinded with sand, and then so brutally assaulted that he died shortly afterwards. This done, the miscreants penetrated to an inner apartment of the house, where they attempted to murder the two children of their victim and an aged lady who was giving them some lessons. One of the children subsequently died. The murderers ransacked the office, and stole all the money they could find. Some brewery shares which fell into their hands were sold to a bank in Pesth, the proceeds being distributed between Stellmacher and two Anarchist newspapers. The memory of this common thief and assassin, who was described as the "Hero of the Proletariat," was commemorated a few months later by the Anarchists of New York, Most and a man named Kennel glorifying his crimes and extolling him as a martyr!

The homicidal maniacs who constitute the extreme section of the Anarchical party are alleged to be all consumed with vanity. The behaviour of most of them in court and prison warrants this assumption. When Ravachol was condemned to death, he wrote an abominable song which he hoped to sing before

a great crowd on the way from the prison to the place of execution. But his calculations were upset by the arrangements of the Prefect of the Loire. When he found, says M. Lepine, that he was to be deprived of an audience, his bravado forsook him, and he collapsed so utterly that he was half-dead before he reached the guillotine.

CHAPTER LVI

BLANQUI

THE mention of Blanqui in the last chapter induces me to turn aside for the purpose of recording particulars of the career of one of the most remarkable revolutionary characters even France has ever produced. That career was strange and stormy—perhaps the strangest and stormiest of the nineteenth century. It came to a close on New Year's Day, 1881. Louis Auguste Blanqui, whose name had been familiar to every democrat in Europe for fifty years before, ceased that day to trouble the world more. "After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well." Never were words so appropriate as in Blanqui's case. His life, indeed, was one long "fitful fever." From the time that he was wounded on a barricade in 1827, down to the agitation in which he was concerned a few days before he died, he had been conspicuous in every revolution and in almost every disturbance that had taken place in Paris. Blanqui was nothing

if not a revolutionist. One half of his long life was spent in prison ; the other half was spent in conspiring or agitating against the various Governments of France. Not untruly did his friends describe him as "the martyr of every reaction." The type of a class which is not even yet extinct, and which will perhaps never be extinct till society has been transformed, all that was kindly and amiable in the old revolutionist was at the time of his death revived to his credit. Whatever was fierce or repellent about Blanqui perished with him. Enemies and admirers alike said little but what was good of the dead.

Garibaldi and Blanqui were born in the same city—Nice. The one attached himself to Italy, the other to France. Garibaldi made a nation ; but Blanqui left little behind him except an austere and turbulent fame. Blanqui's father, a deputy for Nice in the great French Convention, had two sons. Both became eminent, though in totally different walks of life. The elder brother, a pupil of Jean Baptiste Say, acquired great distinction as a writer on political economy. Louis Auguste himself was at first a private tutor ; then he studied both law and medicine in Paris ; lastly, he became alternately a political propagandist and a political prisoner. It was while studying law in 1827 that

he was wounded in a political disturbance. Three years later the Revolution of July overturned the throne of the elder Bourbons. For his share in that memorable event Blanqui was rewarded with a cross of honour. But Louis Philippe was naturally no more acceptable to Blanqui than was Charles the Tenth, whom he had helped to dethrone. Associated with his friends Armand Barbès and Martin Bernard, he planned the insurrection which broke out in May, 1839. The rising was abortive; Barbès was condemned to death; and Blanqui, after being concealed for some time in the house of the famous sculptor, David, was awarded the same sentence. Victor Hugo, making powerful use of a birth and a death in Louis Philippe's family, appealed for mercy in a pathetic poem—"Mercy in the name of the tomb, mercy in the name of the cradle." This touching appeal was successful. Barbès and Blanqui, their lives spared, were ordered to be imprisoned for the rest of their days. The treatment of the prisoners was so frightful—it resembled the treatment of Pellico in Spielburg and Poerio in Naples—that Blanqui nearly died under it. But the Revolution of 1848 restored him to liberty. Lamartine appealed to him to serve instead of harassing the Republic. Blanqui, impressed by the poet's arguments, seemed inclined to yield, but

he was soon afterwards engaged in a plot to overthrow the Provisional Government. The demonstration he had organized, which was discountenanced by Barbès, Cabet, and Louis Blanc, came to nothing. A later attempt to invade the National Assembly, which was frustrated by Ledru Rollin, resulted in Blanqui's condemnation to ten years' imprisonment. Some time after his release he set himself to propagate his doctrines among the refugees in London. Visiting Paris in 1861, he was incarcerated again—this time for a term of four years. When the Empire was beginning to reel, Blanqui concocted a scheme to capture the arms of the Pompiers Barracks. For this he was condemned to death in default. The fall of the Empire, annulling the judgment, enabled him to reappear in Paris. But the Government of National Defence was as little to his liking as the Provisional Government of 1848. A rising of his adherents took place on October 31, 1870; the new Ministers were captured; and Blanqui was actually for a few hours installed in the Hotel de Ville. It was this incident which inspired Bismarck with the hope that internal dissensions would enable the invaders to dictate terms of peace within the walls of Paris. When the capital, after an unavailing resistance, surrendered to the Germans, Blanqui retired to the provinces.

During his absence, two events of moment occurred: he was elected a member of the Commune, and he was condemned to death for the third time. The sentence was afterwards commuted to imprisonment in a fortress for life. Old and infirm, the veteran revolutionist, who was for once well treated in prison, devoted his time to the study of astronomy. The result of his studies was a speculative work entitled "Eternity in the Stars." Blanqui, it was thought, was now too advanced in years to be any longer a danger to the State; wherefore he was once more released. But he was still vigorous enough to commence a new paper, to which he gave the characteristic name *Ni Dieu ni Maître* (*Neither God nor Master*). The paper, however, which had a very small circulation, practically expired before its author. Blanqui died as he had lived—irreconcilable to the last.

The extraordinary career whose salient features I have here summarised was remarkable even in France. It is doubtful whether the whole history of revolutionary enterprises can furnish another such example of romantic endurance, of inveterate hostility to established systems, of sincere and persistent attachment to impracticable ideas. Blanqui was extreme in all things. He was not only a Republican, but a Red Republican—not only a

Democrat, but a Social Democrat—not only a Communalist, but a Communist. No form of Government yet established appeared to satisfy him. He was as much the enemy of the Republic of Jules Grévy as he was of the Empire of Louis Bonaparte. The circumstance that the people were free to work out their own emancipation never seemed to concern him. What was the value of liberty so long as there were any poor in the land? The only use of liberty was to enable those who enjoyed it to agitate and conspire for social equality. There was a touch of eccentricity or extravagance in almost everything he did. Even when a tutor, "he eschewed wine, spirits, and coffee, lived on fruit and vegetables, dispensed with a fire in the depth of winter, and slept composedly with the snow falling on his counterpane." Though he appears to have been sincerely attached to his wife, a rich banker's only child, who died while he was suffering his first incarceration, he was almost devoid of family affection. For a long time he would not allow his son to be taught to read, declaring that he would do better without that accomplishment. The son, brought up a peasant, was so little under his father's influence that he identified himself with the party of Reaction. As to his own brother, the political economist, Blanqui repudiated the relationship. "My

brother," said he, "is a *bourgeois*, and consequently a *canaille*." But his sister, Madame Antoine, attended him in his last days.

Blanqui had never any clear idea of what he wanted to accomplish, or of how he meant to accomplish it. It was necessary to destroy everything in order to place something else in its stead. "We must begin," he observed to a gentleman who visited him in prison, "by making a *tabula rasa* of existing abuses. What exists is so bad that what is put in its place will always be better than what exists." It was as a destructive and an anarchist that he claimed the approbation of the populace. He had neither system nor programme. Indeed, he had a horror of the people who concocted them. M. Ranc related in the *Voltaire*, the Radical paper of Paris, that the surest way to exasperate Blanqui was to ask him what he would do if the people next day placed supreme power in his hands. "I shall act," he would reply with evident irritation, "according to circumstances." So it would seem that the old revolutionist was himself an Opportunist. That he saw the ludicrousness of hoping to transform society of a sudden is clear from another statement of M. Ranc's. Blanqui, Ranc, and Regnard were projecting a new journal in 1869. Ranc was to write on politics, Regnard on philo-

sophy, Blanqui on the social question. "The subject assigned to me," said Blanqui, "is difficult. Do you not see that Socialism is in the stage of criticism?" The same doubts found expression in a speech which he delivered in Milan, only a few weeks before his death, on the occasion of the unveiling of a monument to the heroes who had fallen at Mentana. "Citizens," said he, "I put no faith in those who pretend to solve the social question in a few hours. When, in prison, I worked out an intricate problem of mathematics or astronomy, I only discovered its solution after the lapse of many months. Often I could not solve it at all; I waited, and resumed my task years after. And for the solution of such a problem as the social question, it is not months or even years that will suffice, for one must reckon by centuries. Those who assert the contrary are seeking to lead you astray."

It was natural that a man of Blanqui's temperament and antecedents should live in an atmosphere of suspicion. He suspected everybody, and, in turn, he was himself suspected. During the excitement which followed the Revolution of February, Blanqui was the president of a club which demanded as a first instalment the heads of three hundred thousand citizens! This was

the moment chosen for revealing the fact that he had played false to his friends Barbès and Bernard after the affair of 1839. The statements then published would have been incredible but for the circumstance that Barbès, the Bayard of the Democracy, is said to have believed them. The two revolutionists never acted together afterwards. It is difficult, for all that, to reconcile the accusation with the other incidents in Blanqui's career. A man who could spend thirty-seven years of his life in prison for the sake of his opinions must have been sincere. It was the sincerity of fanaticism, if you will, but it was infinitely more worthy of respect than the falsehood which is true only to itself. "Liberty and the Republic," says M. de Girardin, "never had a more fatal friend than Blanqui." The fault of his life was precisely the fault which Irreconcilables have always been bent upon committing.

CHAPTER LVII

DEGENERACY

OLD people are apt to institute invidious comparisons between the days of their youth and the days of their decline. Maybe the reason is that youth is the season of optimism and age the season of pessimism, though optimism is not invariably a sign of youth nor pessimism invariably a sign of age. But the world cannot always be getting worse, else some day it would come to deserve the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. My own opinion is, trying to recollect the state of things in the thirties and comparing it with the state of things in the new century, that there has been decided improvement in some directions, but decided retrogression in others. The worst complaint one has to make against the later generations is that they have failed to make the best use, or indeed any use at all, of the enormous advantages they enjoy over the generations that preceded them.

Let us begin with education. The masses of the people were entirely ignorant when I was a lad ; indeed, as I have said before, it was a distinction to be able to read and write. Now the masses of the people are at least partly educated—not only able to read and write, but able to do many other clever things besides. There are evidences of intellectual improvement beyond a doubt ; but where are the evidences of moral improvement? As a matter of fact, we are in no respect better, but in some respects worse, than our grandfathers were. We have greater freedom, but less inclination to turn it to the best advantage ; more knowledge, but less desire to use it for the best purposes. Nothing is more disappointing to early reformers than the comparatively little benefit that has accrued to society from the millions of money that have been spent and that are being spent on School Boards and Board Schools. A dear old friend of mine—the late Alderman Lucas, of Gateshead, whose whole public life was devoted to disinterested efforts for the welfare of the community—put into words, a few years before his lamented death, the thoughts of all his reflective contemporaries. "We were assured," he wrote, "that when compulsory education became general we should see Paradise restored. Social and political questions would be

considered on their merits; every man would have liberty to think out all questions concerning his welfare without molestation; crime would gradually disappear before the light of education; and a general transformation of the people (for the better of course) would speedily take place." Some of these anticipations I put myself into a pamphlet published in 1860.

But what has been the result? Let Alderman Lucas answer:—"Intolerance of the worst description is to be found in all directions; brutality in its most horrible forms is still going on; cruelty to the weak and helpless abounds far more than we can estimate; and disregard of authority, if not general, is found almost everywhere. The great object of the lives of multitudes is how to minister to their self-gratification and love of pleasure. One of the main causes of this deplorable state of things is the insufficiency of modern education. The mind is crammed, but the sentiments are left uncultivated." Hence it is that the manners of the people have not improved, that the intelligence of the people has not increased, that the respect of the people (or those who call themselves the people) for the rights of others has almost ceased to exist. Suffering people are pushed to the wall, aged people into the gutter, while our very pavements testify to the

disgusting habits of the time. These and other evils come of cultivating the intellect, while neglecting the conscience. To complete the catalogue of popular faults and foibles which popular education has failed to correct, the masses of the people are as prone to fall victims to plausible delusions or sophisms as they were in more ignorant ages.

The effect on the Press, or on a large portion of the Press, has been disastrous. When few people could read, the matter provided was mostly of an elevating character—rarely of a debasing character: for the few in all ages have invariably been more refined than the many. But since our children have been taught to read without being taught to think, and since everybody can read, whether able to think or not, the general quality of popular reading has distinctly deteriorated. Newspapers find it necessary to play to the groundlings and the gallery, pandering to the lowest tastes because the lowest tastes pervade the biggest multitudes. And so vulgar sensationalism has taken the place of sober earnestness. Instead of being the instructors of the people, many of our newspapers have become mere ministers to the passions of the people. Some of them that profess to be intended for family reading even descended a few years ago to the level of the "penny dreadful," publishing stories

that were founded on the most atrocious crimes of the age. A daily paper that was established in London to advance the interests of a great political party—its chief promoter was a university professor—borrowed from the American Press one of its worst features. All the news of the day was furnished with vulgar headings. Even sad and sorrowful news was made the occasion of coarse jests. It seemed as if the scholarly gentlemen who had set out to exalt a great party had set out also to degrade the general multitude.

Periodicals did not escape the lamentable infection. The most popular of the new periodicals owed its early success to an ingenious method of picking and stealing from all and sundry. It soon had imitators no better than itself. And so the superior publications of Chambers and Cassell were to a large extent superseded by a series of slangy and superficial serials which could not support themselves by their own merits, for they made no pretence to originality or skill, and which had to be bolstered up by evasions of the Lottery Act, and such panderings to the gambling propensities of the people as the missing word competitions. Worse than these publications were others that came as near to the vilest indecency in print and illustration as the law will allow. The taste that was thus encouraged was further sustained

by some of the new magazines, which rival each other in the publication of stories of rapine and outrage, supplemented by pictures of abortions and similarly repulsive subjects.

The disease that has eaten into the vitals of the Press has shown itself also in Fiction and the Drama. It is recorded that Sir Walter Scott, shortly before he died, consoled himself with the reflection that he had done nothing with his pen that any upright or pure-minded man might regret. "I have been perhaps," he said, "the most voluminous author of my day; and it is a great comfort for me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principles, and that I have written nothing which, on my death-bed, I should wish blotted out." Some of the "voluminous authors" of our day—they are not numerous, perhaps, but they are sufficiently repugnant—may hereafter, when in the same straits as the great novelist, wish that they, too, had tried to corrupt no man's principles. There are books now on the shelves of our libraries, with noted (though I will not say distinguished) names attached to them, which Sir Walter Scott would have gone to the pillory or the gallows rather than have written. Sarah Grand, herself by no means squeamish, said of one of them that the author seemed "to want us to

return to the customs of the poultry yard." And then we had an English Zola who revelled in the details of a lying-in hospital. And then—most repulsive of all—the novelist who laid down the abandoned doctrine that the father of a woman's child was no more anybody's concern than the cut or fashion of her under-garments. If the people —for women as well as men have been connected with the work of pollution—if the people who have produced these books should be remembered at all in the annals of literature, they will have to be classified with the creatures who, in past ages, prostituted their talents to pander to the vices of their time.

The plea of realism which is sometimes put forward on behalf of odious authors is a paltry plea. It is not even real itself. "If," says an American critic, "there is any greater humbug and hypocrisy than 'realism' can be, I do not know what it is. Take, for instance, the single detail of profanity in the 'conversation' of a story. Is there a living realist who would be willing to put down in cold black and white to the extent of a foolscap page the habitual language of certain types with which he deals in fiction? And if he did so, would he be willing to keep that piece of paper over-night even under lock and key?" When

Henry Vizetelly—our old acquaintance of the *Illustrated Times*—published translations of some of Zola's realism, which in this case was simply another name for mere beastliness, he was prosecuted for misdemeanour, fined a hundred pounds, and ordered to be of "good behaviour" afterwards. Yet not long subsequently "gentlemen of the Press" entertained Zola himself at a public function in London! More recently, one of the most eminent of American authors, writing in a leading American magazine, set himself to exalt the French writer on the ground that there is nothing immoral in his obscenity! Fine literary people, women as well as men, seem to be afflicted with a paralysis of the moral sense when they can note nothing offensive in indecency, just as those unfortunate people who can smell nothing evil in a cesspool or a pig-sty are afflicted with a paralysis of the physical sense. There is filth enough in real life which one cannot avoid seeing without going to books for it. We know that sewers and stenches exist; but some of our modern writers have sought to introduce them into our kitchens and our drawing-rooms. The race of authors must indeed have degenerated when they actually itch for the opportunity of embalming in literature the unthinkable blasphemies of the stews.

The stage has no more escaped the contagion of decadency than has literature. Patrons of theatres have been nauseated with the loathsome suggestiveness of the problem play. Harlots and strumpets have been made the heroines of dramas, and accomplished actresses have not hesitated to represent these disreputable characters behind the footlights. Why, it is not so long ago that three or four plays idealising the adventures of a courtesan of the most dissolute period of English history were running in our theatres at the same time. But perhaps the most odious production of all—a production which had not even the saving grace of literary merit —came from America. It was the work of an obscure playwright of that country; it was founded on a story by an obscene French writer; and it was produced by a leading actor at a leading theatre in London. As brutal an incident as it is possible to conceive as occurring among the vilest people on earth was actually presented on the stage. We may judge of the nature of the play by the statement of one of the critics that the "revolting details" of the plot could not be described in print without outraging decency and offending the reader. Yet there were women writers who could not or would not see the gross immorality of the production, and who spoke of the disgusting incident on which

the plot turned as a "strong situation." Nor was it till many remonstrances had been addressed to him that the manager withdrew the hideous thing.

But, after all, we are not so depraved in theatrical matters as some other countries. One hears of plays and performances in France and Belgium which are fit only for satyrs. As for America, one of the principal members of a band of thieves and murderers known as the James Boys actually appeared on the stage in scenes that depicted his own atrocious exploits. More recently the news was considered sufficiently important to be telegraphed from New York to Cincinnati that a star actor was "about to bring out a play founded on the Whitechapel murders," he himself appearing in "the dual *rôle* of Jack the Ripper and a clergyman"!

Impartially reviewing the circumstances of the present and the past, I venture to say that the penny dreadful of my young days did far less harm to the morals of the people than the disgusting rubbish that finds a place in the plays and novels of our own time. Nor is it to be less deplored that critics and pressmen, even those of the highest standing, pass without censure books and dramas of the worst character, precisely as though they had no duty to condemn the gross and repulsive foulness that is cast before the public.

CHAPTER LVIII

THE DECLINE OF MAN

MEN who have done the best for the world have the best right to be disappointed with the result of their efforts. "With few exceptions," wrote Mazzini to Mathilde Blind, "I despise the present generation, and only in humanity as it will be in the future do I find any consolation." Kossuth concurred in the sentiment of Mazzini, for he wrote on his ninetieth birthday :—"I do not believe in humanity as now developed. As for society, it is a vile beast." It is not a little curious that Napoleon entertained much the same disparaging opinion of our race. "Mankind," he said to Gourgaud, at St. Helena, "must be very bad to be as bad as I consider it." And Marie Corelli clenches the austere indictment :—"Humanity has cursed and killed every great benefactor it ever had, including Christ." For the rest, it will not be easy for those of us who have lived long on the earth to dispute this further judgment of the

same writer :—"No beast of the field is so beastly as man at his worst."

The records of crime and the circumstances of society go far to justify these harsh and unpalatable verdicts. We have never for any length of time been without a favourite miscreant since Probert, Hunt, and Thurtell were tried for the murder of William Weare. This was in 1824. Four years later—I am taking into account only the princes of crime—the populace was greatly interested in the murder of Maria Martin and the yet more horrible misdeeds of Burke and Hare. Greenacre came next—Greenacre, who carried about in public conveyances the head of his victim wrapped in a paper parcel. The baleful procession was continued by Courvoisier in 1839 ; Daniel Good in 1842 ; Tawell and Hocker in 1845 ; Mrs. Manning and James Bloomfield Rush in 1849 ; Palmer, the Rugeley poisoner, in 1856 ; Madeleine Smith in 1857 ; George Victor Towneley in 1863 ; Müller in 1864 ; Dr. Pritchard, Charlotte Winsor, and Constance Kent in 1865 ; Mary Anne Cotton in 1873 ; Wainwright in 1875 ; Peace in 1879 ; Lefroy in 1881 ; the Phœnix Park assassins in 1882. And then came the Whitechapel fiend, followed by many other monsters. But some of these crimes indicated less cowardly brutality on the part of the criminals,

besides bringing less shame and disgrace on society, than the despicable assaults on women that occupy, every working day, the attention of our police-courts.

The editor of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* took the trouble in 1884, in the hope of shaming the brutes who make us disgusted with our own species, to compile a record of a week's wife-beating. The cases were thirty in number. Yet it was from a few of the leading newspapers only that the list was compiled, and it was pointed out, as is well known, that but a small proportion of the most infamous cases find their way into such journals. If it had been possible to prepare a complete catalogue of these brutal offences, there is no doubt that the number would have risen to hundreds. Hundreds of wife-beatings every week! Nothing shows the degeneracy of the British race so much as the cowardice displayed in the ill-treatment of the weaker sex. Has there been any improvement since 1884? A blackguard who had deserted his wife in Sunderland told the magistrates in 1899 that the "only enjoyment a working man had was getting drunk." But a still more contemptible specimen of manhood turned up at Teddington the same year. The prisoner in this case was charged, not with deserting, but with assaulting his wife. The poor woman stated that "he had always

been in the habit of knocking her about." When asked by the magistrates what he meant by such conduct, the ruffian replied in "an injured tone" that "it was the only recreation he had." Foreigners, when they read such cases as those of Sunderland and Teddington, may be almost excused if they put us down as a nation of sots and savages.

Some of us are sots and dastards, and some are dastards without being sots. The new century has supplied many examples of both forms. A woman was being murdered on Yarmouth sands. Her cries for help were heard by a young man (the man in this case must be understood in a quite restricted sense) who was passing. But the prudent young man went on his way, not only without rendering, but without seeking, assistance. An equally scandalous case of indifference was disclosed at the Norwich Assizes. The widow of a soldier who had died for his country in South Africa, lived alone with her baby in a cottage at the village of Stokesby. The poor woman's sorrow and loneliness might have been expected to ensure pity and protection. Instead, they seem to have inspired a brutal youth of seventeen to attempt a criminal assault. The attack was made while the widow was calmly sleeping with her baby. There was a fierce struggle, and then the knife. The woman's

screams were heard by a man living in the adjoining cottage. Here again no assistance was rendered or sought. While the murderer resumed his work next morning as if nothing had happened, his victim remained without aid all night, and died the following day. The jury, with that strange tenderness for criminals which has lately become a fashion, recommended the murderer to mercy, though it is not recorded that they had anything to say about the cowardly neighbour.

A still worse case of poltroonery occurred on the first day of the new century. It took place at Broomhill Colliery, in Northumberland. There a ruffian miner named Craig struck and kicked his wife in such a way that she died a few days later. And part of the striking and kicking took place in the very presence of three other miners—John Joicey, Richard Grey, and John Richardson—whose only excuse for permitting it was that they had been "first-footing." Joicey, indeed, had listened behind a door for half an hour to the beating and kicking before he and the others ventured into the house where the murderer had already half-killed his victim. The sickening story told by this man and the other witnesses at the trial must have made the people who heard or read it ashamed of their own species.

Drink was the cause of the Broomhill atrocity, as, indeed, it is of most of the other crimes committed in this country. Yet drunkenness is no longer a matter of shame. On the contrary, it is sometimes a matter of pride. The sots who can drink the most or get drunk the oftenest consider themselves heroes and heroines, and are even so considered by others. The drunkard was once a disgrace, but we have got past this squeamish notion now. Workmen, it is alleged, will work no longer than they can earn money enough for a three days' booze. And social clubs and political clubs are being established in all our industrial villages to enable them to drink all day and every day, Sundays included. Three youths of sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen years of age, in a case heard at the Moot Hall Police Court, Newcastle, admitted having drunk in the space of three hours nine or ten glasses of beer each. We talk of swine. Why, swine are almost gentlemen alongside such swill-tubs as these.

While there has been shown in recent years a marked decline in mortality from ordinary diseases, the deaths from intemperance rose from 45 per million in 1878 to 77 per million in 1897. The North of England has probably contributed more than its share to this loss of life; for to

Durham, Northumberland, and Lancashire belong the distinction of being the three most dissipated counties in the kingdom. As compared with soberer districts, they stand convicted of producing more than a thousand drunkards as against less than 150. Though the national drink bill for 1900 (£160,891,718) was a million and a quarter less than the corresponding expenditure in 1899, it was yet equal to an outlay of £3 18*s.* 8*d.* for every unit of the population. The rents of all the farms and houses in the country fall short of the money we spend annually on intoxicants. We are indeed a drunken nation. And the effect of our evil habits on the future of our race must be calamitous. If we do not want to become a nation of degenerates, we must cease to become a nation of drunkards.

Since drink, taken to excess, makes either demons or imbeciles of its victims, it may fairly be held accountable for part at least of that alarming increase of insanity which has been recorded in late years. Lunatics have increased in proportion to the population far faster than the population itself. The total number of lunatics in England and Wales in 1899 was 105,086, being an increase of 3,114 over the corresponding number for 1898. Mr. H. H. Asquith informed a meeting held in this present

year, 1903, that besides the 110,000 persons actually confined in lunatic asylums, "he believed there were at least 100,000 more in what was known as the outer zone of lunacy." It is calculated that the growth of mad people in the administrative County of London alone is at the rate of 500 a year, requiring the erection every four years of a new asylum, at the cost of £600,000. The progression of madness was steady from the middle to the end of last century. Thus in 1859 there was one official lunatic to every 536 persons; in 1869 one to 418; in 1889 one to 337; and in 1899 one to 302. It is easy for a statistician to calculate how long it will be, at this rate, before the whole population is liable to be confined in lunatic asylums.

Mr. Arnold White has more than once called attention to what he calls the multiplication of the unfit. "Our higher civilization," he says, "is multiplying from its lower specimens, and our voters are being propagated increasingly from idle, unthrifty, and unemployable invalids. Scientific men declare that there are nine sorts of idiots and six sorts of madmen. All these fifteen kinds of idiots and madmen are cheerfully multiplying with impunity.[1] Yet the dogma is still current among religious and

[1] Sir James Crichton Browne lately quoted a case in which the ten children of a half-witted father were all imbeciles.

kindly souls that a man who cannot maintain himself possesses an inalienable right to engender degenerate offspring, to whom no parental responsibility is due." A professor of the University of Bonn traced the progeny of a woman named Jurke, a drunken and thievish vagabond who died in 1740. There was 834 altogether—106 of them bastards, 142 of them beggars, 181 of them prostitutes, 76 of them criminals, and 7 of them murderers. And it is a grievous charge against some of our charitable institutions that they contribute to the maintenance and multiplication of persons who are so mentally and morally diseased that they must always be a burden on others.

There is a sort of degeneracy again in the everlasting craving for excitement. We make a business of pleasure, not a pleasure of business. Seriousness has gone out of fashion. All we seem to want is amusement or indulgence. And our amusements are not always elevating. Intellectual pastimes are but little patronised, while brutal sports are always sure of a large following. Chess-masters have to be content with modest prizes of a hundred or two hundred pounds; but two pugilists fought in America for stakes amounting to £9,000! Glove fights in England are often as brutal as the old prize-fights. It was said of the Chartists of Swalwell that they

got up a boxing-match for the benefit of the Chartist prisoners. Much the same spirit prevails yet. During the election for 1892, the proceedings at a political meeting were suspended in order to watch a fight between two supporters of the rival candidates, and a member of Parliament, after the fight had concluded, called for "three cheers for the Morley man!" Blood sports are still as popular as ever, where the law allows them. Nor would the sports of the bull-ring, with all their horrible accompaniments, lack patrons among us if permission could be obtained for introducing them. Even football, splendid pastime as it is, is being ruined by the introduction of the professional and gambling elements. Hence the rowdyism which sometimes takes place when the favourite team gets beaten.

Gambling is a species of insanity that takes possession of all classes—rich as well as poor, women as well as men. The cases of three wastrels who had reduced themselves from affluence to bankruptcy (in one case beggary) by betting and extravagance were investigated in 1898. One had wasted £11,000 in four months, and was then in prison for obtaining money under false pretences; another had got rid of £30,000 in three years, was in debt to the tune of between two and three thousand pounds, and had

no assets save a punt of the value of £10; the third, a peer of the realm, who had inherited an annual income of £15,000 eight years before, and whose debts amounted to £166,000, with assets *nil*, confessed that he had in one season lost as much as £20,000 on horse-racing alone. As gambling and the society of gamblers conduce to loose morals and loose conversation, society is increasingly demoralised by the growth of the gambling spirit. And so we get evil habits and evil conversation—coarseness and vulgarity all round.

While the conditions of life have vastly improved during the last seventy years, greater efforts than ever being made by society and the Legislature to add to the comforts of the people, I am sorry to have to confess that I see no evidence of any moral progress whatever. There was far less drunkenness when I was a boy than there is now. People were more thrifty, less given to scamp or shirk their work, and more disposed to rely on their own efforts than on the efforts of others. On the other hand, there is better teaching now than there was then, fewer class distinctions, less cause for discontent among the poor, and more social and political freedom. One must not therefore despair. Mazzini had hope in humanity as it will be in the future. We should be false to our faith in the destinies

of the human race, if we did not believe that degeneracy is only a passing symptom, and that the onward march of mankind will one day be resumed —all the more reliantly and resolutely resumed because of the present retrogression.

CHAPTER LIX

À PROPOS

A CHAPTER of good stories, though I have told some of them before in another place, may be *àpropos* here. As far as I know, only two of them were Joe Millers, except as gossip among friends, when I first put them in print. However, whether new or not—chestnuts or tinker's news—they will perhaps be amusing.

Let us begin with a lawyer's story—told to me by a lawyer, too. There lived in Newcastle a good many years ago a clever attorney of the name of Philip Stanton. Mr. Stanton had for one of his clients a well-known Quaker bachelor of that time. During a consultation, the client complained of the useless verbiage employed in legal documents. The man of law explained, however, that precise and elaborate expressions were really necessary in all such instruments. "For instance," he said, "if an earthquake were to occur in Newcastle, the ordinary newspaper report would probably read

as follows :—'Mr. Bachelor and his housekeeper were thrown out of bed.' But a lawyer, drawing up a legal account of the occurrence, would say : 'Mr. Bachelor and his housekeeper were thrown out of their respective beds!'"

Another lawyer, John Clayton, was Town Clerk of Newcastle and a gentleman of great wealth. So far as the public knew, he did not dispense much in charities : for, as he was said to have remarked himself, he was "never an ostentatious giver." Mr. Clayton was a bachelor, and the heir to all his wealth was his nephew, Nathaniel George Clayton. When a collector for one of the institutions in the town called upon him to solicit a subscription, he was handed a sovereign. "Oh, but, Mr. Clayton," said the collector, "I would not like to see your name to so small a sum. Mr. Nathaniel George is down for five pounds." "Ah!" replied Mr. Clayton, "my nephew has great expectations : I have none."

Ralph Park Philipson succeeded John Clayton as Town Clerk of Newcastle. He was a shrewd lawyer, too, and for many years the chief adviser of the Whig party in the town. Among the members of the Town Council at the time was Ralph Dodds. Ralphy Dodds, as he was generally called, was a curious customer. He was also a

magistrate, an alderman, and chairman of the Town Improvement Committee. One day, during a discussion in committee on some legal subject, a member quoted the opinion of Baron Martin. "Wey, ma man," interposed the chairman, as he patted Mr. Philipson on the back, "here's wor Baron Martin."

Mr. Dodds in his early days obtained the contract for the plastering work at Ravensworth Castle. The contractor was not known to the then Lord Ravensworth, nor was the then Lord Ravensworth known to the plasterer. While the work was in progress, the two met in the new building. Seeing a stranger, the noble lord asked him rather haughtily who he was. The reply was startling: "Aa's Ralphy Dodds the plaisterer: whe the h— are ye?"

Harking back to the lawyers, there is another story of Ravensworth Castle. But first as to the etiquette of visiting. "If," says an authority on the subject, "you go to a house in response to a card of invitation, you may take it for granted that the maid knows you are expected, or should know; you walk in, and merely wait in the hall while she asks you your name and announces you. To do otherwise might convey an impression that you are not an expected guest." A Newcastle lawyer who did "otherwise" met with a most unpleasant

experience. The lawyer practised in a Court of Petty Sessions over which a later Lord Ravensworth frequently presided. One day his lordship, wandering about his estate, fell in with a hunting party (the lawyer being of the number), whom he invited to dine with him the next evening. The lawyer, like the rest of the hunters, presented himself at the castle. All the other guests had arrived, and, in fact, were already seated. The legal gentleman, however, instead of acting as an invited guest should have done, inquired if Lord Ravensworth was at home. "Yes," said the butler, "but his lordship is at dinner. If you will give me your card, I will take it to him." The card was presented. "Oh!" said the noble lord, looking at the name, but not recognising that the owner was one of the party he had invited to dine, "tell Mr. Parchment I will see him at the Court in the morning." And so the poor lawyer, through failing to understand the etiquette of visiting, had to trudge back to town, some three or four miles distant, without his dinner.

And now for a small story, not of lawyers, but of the law. A poor woman applied to the Registrar of a County Court in the North of England for a longer time to pay a debt she had been ordered to discharge in instalments. "But I can only do

this," said the Registrar, "for one of two reasons —illness or unavoidable accident. You do not look ill, and you have not, I suppose, met with an unavoidable accident." "Oh, yes, I have, sir," replied the debtor, "I've had a baby!"

It was fear of the law, or of the public inquiry which the law enforces in the case of a sudden or violent death, that led a servant girl to act strangely. The members of a Newcastle family— I shouldn't be far wrong if I said it was my own —were sitting down to the Sunday's dinner. The joint was just served, and the diners were on the tiptoe of expectation. But there's many a slip, etc. Crash! Down came the ceiling with its heavy plaster ornament. The chandelier was smashed: so was the table: so was everything on the table. Joint and vegetables, bread and salt, water-jug and cruet-stand, plates, dishes, glasses, knives, forks, spoons—all were piled in a heap on the floor. The ladies screamed, the children shrieked, the gentlemen shouted. The noise of the falling debris was hardly so loud as the cries of the disappointed bairns. For that day's dinner the family had to make the best of pudding and cheese. Notwithstanding the uproar, it was noticed that the servant-girl did not put in an appearance. "Why, Susan," said the mistress of the house, "did you not hear

the noise?" "Hear it, mum?" replied Susan; "aa shud think se." "Why, then, did you not come to see what was the matter?" "Not me, mum," was Susan's answer: "aa didn't want te be caalled te ne coroner's inquests!"

It happened not so long ago that a candidate for a Northern borough fell in with an old friend who belonged to the opposite party. Liberal and Conservative adjourned to the club, where they fraternised heartily. There was much political excitement at the time. The excitement or something else made the old friends hilarious. As the Conservative was the least incapable of the two, he volunteered to see the candidate home. When the door was opened and the lady of the house appeared in the hall, the Conservative pointed to his helpless companion. "Look there, Mrs. H-hicks," he hiccupped; "see what them d——d Radicals have done for your hus-husband!"

Of this same Conservative another story was told years before. He was the son of a wealthy coal-owner, and became in the end a wealthy coal-owner himself. But he was kept under restraint in his youth, and was, until he succeeded to his father's estate and fortune, allowed only a moderate amount of pocket-money. It was during this period of subservience that he met some other golden youths

in a bar-room. Told there that the father of one of his friends had just died, he exclaimed as he dejectedly thrust his hands deep into his pockets, "Ugh! everybody's father dies but mine!"

Two friends, journalists, who had been to see a boat-race on the Tyne, were returning up Dean Street, when they saw the announcement that a fat woman was on exhibition in a shop. "Let us go in," said one, and the other assented. The interview over, they retired. As they reached the door into the street, they heard the showman bawling to the crowd: "Mark the character of the haristocracy as they leave the pavilion!" I need not say that the aristocracy hastened to hide themselves among the common people.

A good story was picked up in Shields by a dear old colleague, the late Robert Sutherland. During one of the periodical depressions in the shipping trade, a farmer in the neighbourhood, who had lost heavily on shipping shares, came home one day after a shareholders' meeting, called for his gun, and began firing away at the ducks on his pond. When asked what he was doing this for, he angrily muttered, "Ne mair floatin' property for me; ne mair floatin' property for me!"

Of Irish stories there is no end. Two were told me by a friend, who avowed that the incidents

occurred in his own presence. A tourist on a jaunting car, seeing an angler in a Wicklow stream, asked the driver whether he was getting any sport. "Sport!" exclaimed the driver: "shure he'd have got more bites if he'd kept in bed!" The scene of the second story was New York. An Irish labourer, watching some Italians at what they called work, said to a bystander: "D'ye see thim apologies for min, sor? And yet they make Popes of thim in Italy." Now for one of my own. I was travelling with some friends in the vicinity of the Devil's Bit Mountain—the mountain which gets its name from the legend that the fiend, finding himself surrounded by old women, cut his way to the sea by making a gap in the hills. The legend was duly related by the driver of the jaunting car. "Do you believe it?" inquired one of the party. "Bedad!" returned Pat, "but he's left his marrk annyhow!"

The late Alexander Shannon Stevenson brought from Scotland a triad of good stories a few months before he died. Mr. Young, the famous paraffin oil man, was approached by a neighbour with the suggestion that a missionary should be appointed to look after the spiritual welfare of his workpeople. "It's no a bit o' guid," said Young; "aw paid a missionary mysel' a hunnerd a year for twa years,

and he didna save a dom'd soul!" A pious old lady was invited to pay a visit to a friend. "Varra weel," she replied, "aw'll come if aw'm spared; but if aw'm no, ye'll no expect me." Mr. Balfour should include the third story in the next edition of his treatise on the "royal game." It is the keeper of one of the best golf courses in Scotland who speaks. "The Awmighty," said he, "must hae had a guid heed for goaf when He made yon green!"

John Lawrence Toole was always playing tricks at somebody's expense before he unhappily became helpless from paralysis. One of his tricks, when he was acting Paul Pry, was to introduce the names of his local friends to the company on the stage. Thus on a certain occasion, knowing I was in the theatre, for I had just seen him in his dressing room, he said he had "just popped in" to say that he had that very morning seen a big cabbage or a big gooseberry in "Mr. Adams's garden." It was the only time I was ever in an actor's dressing-room. Mr. Disraeli is credited with the caustic saying that when royalty is concerned you have to lay on flattery with a trowel. Mr. Toole, I thought, had found it necessary, when making up for Paul Pry, to lay on paint with the same implement. Miss Eliza Johnstone and Miss Kate Carlyon were

leading ladies of Mr. Toole's company when he went touring in the provinces. It was upon these and others (as Miss Carlyon told me) that he once played this pleasant trick. "My dear," said Toole to Miss Carlyon, "I want to make you a little present. But keep it quite secret from the rest. I know how jealous you ladies are of one another." The present was a brooch, I believe. And then he went to the other ladies in turn, presenting a similar trinket to each, and laying the same injunction in every case. But the secret couldn't be kept—J. L. knew that well enough. Great was the confusion of the recipients when, confiding to their bosom friends the marks of favour they had received from their chief, they discovered that precisely the same favours had been distributed all round!

The district of Tyneside was visited in 1886 by two lecturers who represented opposite schools of thought. One was a Russian exile who advocated anarchy; another was a member of a noble family who advocated individualism. The two met at the same table, when the talk turned on methods of propagandism. Did the anarchist, asked the individualist, believe in dynamite? "No," he responded, as calmly as if he had been answering a question about the sort of soup he preferred—

"no, I do not pelieve in dynamite." The individualist, one of the gentlest men that ever lived, rubbed his hands, and said he was delighted to hear him say so. "No," the anarchist went on in the same impassive tone, "dynamite does not do what is expected. It killed soldiers and servants at the Winter Palace, but not the Czar. Pesides, it makes people dislike the party which uses it. No, dynamite is not goot. Ze dagger is petter!"

Another lecturer who for fifty years and more has often been heard in Newcastle and all parts of the country had chambers in London conveniently provided with gas fires. One day he locked up his chambers and went on a three months' tour, and when he came back in the dog days his gas fire was still burning!

An absent-minded beggar of a different sort was the custodian of an editor's sanctum who absented himself with the keys. The editor was Frederick Guest Tomlins, author of a "History of England," whose acquaintance I made when he came to beg a copy of the "Tyrannicide" pamphlet for the purpose of making it the subject of one of his weekly contributions to a London newspaper. One morning, when Tomlins was editing *Douglas Jerrold's Newspaper*, he found his office door locked and no office-boy on the premises. The boy appeared at

length, and explained that he had been up all night. "It's this way, sir," he said: "my uncle was hung at the Old Bailey this morning, and although we weren't on speaking terms with him, I thought, as one of the family, I ought to go and see the last of him." "Quite right," replied Tomlins, "never neglect your family duties; but when another of your relations is to be hanged, please to leave the office key under the mat."

Mr. Tomlins at the time I knew him supplemented his literary labours by keeping a shop for the sale of rare old books near the British Museum. But he loved his books so well that he once roundly abused a customer who wanted to buy one. It is George Agustus Sala who tells the story. The customer called at the shop, and asked for a particular volume marked in the catalogue. The bookseller mounted a ladder, picked out a book from the upper shelves, and began reading it. And he stood reading it for so long a time that the other had to remind him that he was waiting below. Then Tomlins replaced the book, descended the ladder, and told the customer that it was like his impudence to want to rob him of such a treasure!

My last story is also about an editor. During a great industrial crisis—I think it was the Nine Hours Strike—his paper had taken strong views

on the side of the working people. One day a deputation of capitalists called to remonstrate with him on the subject. The deputation hinted that he would damage his paper. This stirred him up. "Well, gentlemen," said he, "the working man's penny is as good as yours, and there's a d——d sight more of 'em!"

CHAPTER LX

PEOPLE OF SOME IMPORTANCE IN THEIR DAY

WHEN Mr. Bradlaugh once announced a lecture on "Dead Men I have Known," I pointed out the solecism in the title; whereupon he altered it to "Dead Men whom I Knew when Living." The new title was clumsier, but more correct, than the old. I have already mentioned in the course of this narrative some of the dead men whom I also knew when living. These recollections may now be supplemented by references to a few others—some dead, some still living—whom I have seen, or heard, or known.

First as to public speakers. Immense interest was taken in the affairs of Italy from 1849 down to the time when the unity and independence of the country were accomplished. It was in 1849 that Garibaldi made that heroic defence of Rome which first gave him a European reputation. Conspicuous in the defence, as an orator inspiring the

populace, was an Italian priest, Father Gavazzi. Father Gavazzi came to England in 1850, where he lectured for many years—first in Italian and then in English—first on political subjects and then on subjects connected with the Church. I heard him in Italian the year he came. The melodious language and the striking attitudes of the orator were most impressive. More impressive still was the use which he made of a long cloak that he wore. Gavazzi turned this long cloak to as much advantage as Dr. Parker in his younger years used to turn his long hair. Another famous orator of the same period was John B. Gough. He came from America, and he advocated temperance. Gough thrilled his audiences as he depicted the drunkard's doom. It was impossible to listen without admiration to his impassioned appeals. But there was one exquisite passage about water introduced into some of his addresses which he is said to have borrowed from somebody else. For all that, John B. Gough was really a great orator. George Thompson was as famous at that time for his denunciations of slavery as Gough for his denunciations of drink. Unfortunately, having no resources but his eloquence, he had to become the paid advocate of the movements to which he gave his assistance. John Arthur Roebuck was an incisive speaker, rather than an

orator. But his speeches were marred by egotism. I have preserved the report of one in which the personal pronoun appears in almost every line, and sometimes twice or thrice in the same line. Mr. Roebuck once likened himself to a watch-dog, Tear 'Em, and ever afterwards the populace gave him that name. Mr. Disraeli was a clever debater—the inventor, too, of many clever phrases. It was not given to him, however, to sway the multitude. When he was visiting Manchester on the occasion of a great Conservative gathering in Pomona Gardens, he was invited to distribute the prizes that had been won at an educational institution in the town. The long address he then delivered, I recollect, was intolerably dull. Mr. Gladstone, his great rival, was sometimes verbose and often obscure, but he knew how to illuminate the driest of subjects. Perhaps his versatility was never better shown than in 1880, when, on his way to Midlothian, he delivered fervent speeches at every railway station on the road. The crowd at the Central Station, Newcastle, was enormous. It surged from side to side of the platform alongside the train in a manner that threatened perilous consequences. The appearance of Mr. Gladstone at the window of his carriage was the signal for immense cheering. I heard the single word "Gentlemen," and then was swept to another

part of the platform. The rest was dumb show, except to the porters and reporters on the top of the carriage. Dr. Parker has just been mentioned. It was at Cavendish Chapel, Manchester, that he made so effective (albeit so theatrical) a use of his hair. The hair, dark and abundant then, was grey and scanty when I heard him at Bournemouth forty years later. All his somewhat pompous mannerisms notwithstanding, the old Hexham boy was a powerful preacher. Very different was the style of the old Newcastle boy, Thomas Binney, whose little treatise on the possibility of making the best of both worlds had an immense vogue in the middle years of the century. A long tramp I made one Sunday morning at that time to the Weigh House Chapel, in the very centre of the City of London, was not unrewarded, though Mr. Binney's sermon was devoted to the not very attractive theme of Church Government and Discipline. While Mr. Binney was preaching near the Monument, Robert Montgomery was ministering to a congregation in the neighbourhood of Tottenham Court Road. Montgomery had also published a notable book—the poem entitled "Satan." Macaulay scarified it in a famous review, and the title attached itself to the name of the author, so that he is known to this day as "Satan Montgomery." I recollect nothing of the poet's

sermon save a dainty phrase or two that occurred in it.[1] Henry Ward Beecher was a more powerful preacher than any of those yet named. I crossed over from New York to Brooklyn to hear him in 1882—it was before the great Brooklyn Bridge had been built. The church outside was about as handsome as a barn. Inside, however, the seats were so conveniently arranged that everybody faced the preacher. There was no pulpit, but, instead, a broad platform, at either end of which was a huge spittoon, something of the shape and size of a washing-tub. Mr. Beecher paced up and down the platform as he delivered himself of many fine passages—many humorous passages, too, which set the congregation "teetering on the precipice of a laugh." A more eccentric preacher than Beecher was Peter Mackenzie, who used to make his congregation laugh outright. When Peter occupied the pulpit at Jesmond Wesleyan Church, Newcastle, the performance was almost as good as a play. It was less a sermon than an entertainment. All

[1] Sir John Bowring, in some autobiographical reminiscences that were published after his death, says:—"Montgomery's real patronymic was Gomery—the son of the clown of that name—but he sought to aristocratise his designation, and wished to be called 'The Poet Montgomery,' an ambition which gave no little offence to James Montgomery, the veritable poet, who stands in the first rank of devotional minstrels."

the same, the preacher was terribly in earnest, for he perspired like a race-horse. Other eminent preachers have been lecturers also. Mr. Spurgeon, lecturing on the use of anecdote in the pulpit, kept a large audience in the Town Hall, Newcastle, amused and delighted for more than an hour as he told story after story. The Town Hall was crammed on another occasion when Dr. Morley Punshon enchained and enchanted the crowd with his eloquence. Dr. Punshon was a Wesleyan ; so is Mr. Fred. W. Macdonald, an ex-President of the Conference, and an uncle of Rudyard Kipling's. No pleasanter lecture was ever delivered in my hearing than that which Mr. Macdonald gave in Newcastle on his experiences in America.

Novelists have quite as much claim to attention as preachers and lecturers. The great novelist of the sea, the legitimate successor of Captain Marryat, is undoubtedly William Clark Russell. Mr. Russell began his literary life as a journalist. For some time he was a member of the staff of the *Newcastle Chronicle*. When he left to join the staff of the *Daily Telegraph*, he was followed to London by the esteem and regret of all his colleagues. Alas ! he was soon afterwards seized with paralysis, and has now for many years been compelled to take the air in a bath chair at Bath.

But his physical helplessness has not impaired his intellectual productiveness. Twice a year or so he adds to the gaiety of nations by a new novel of the sea. All the moods of the changeful waste are described in his books with wonderful fidelity. Not less wonderful is the fertility of an imagination that can work out one exciting plot after another within the comparatively narrow scope afforded by a brig or a schooner. Many of Hall Caine's stories have had a comparatively narrow field too—the Isle of Man. It was while he was writing "The Bondman" that he came to Newcastle to get local colouring for a little story he contributed to one of the Christmas numbers of the *Weekly Chronicle*. He did not remain long; but he remained long enough to leave the impression, strengthened by subsequent correspondence, of a genial gentleman without pride or pretence of any sort. Joseph Hatton, whose pleasant novels, numerous enough to fill a library, are fit for anybody's reading, is as genial, as accessible, and as devoid of humbug or assumption as Hall Caine. And so with John Strange Winter, who, relieved by her husband of the care and worry of business, devotes the major part of a happy married life to the production of tales that are as popular as they are short. Mrs. Stannard (to give her her real name) deserves

credit for a great public service when she scotched and crushed a threatened revival of the crinoline.

Both Literature and the Press owe a deep debt of gratitude to the men who in earlier days fought and struggled to remove the taxes on knowledge. This object was completely accomplished at the end of a twelve years' agitation. Collet Dobson Collet, who was educated for the law, but who became a musician, acted as secretary to the Society for the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge from its inception to its dissolution. Mr. Collet, in the first or second year of the movement, came on a mission to Cheltenham, bringing with him, I remember, what might have been his own swimming bath. Not long before he had been deputed with W. J. Linton to visit Paris and congratulate the French Republic in the name of the Reformers of London on the downfall of Louis Philippe. Lloyd Jones, Edward Truelove, and George Jacob Holyoake were more or less intimately associated with the knowledge movement. As a popular lecturer on social and political questions, Lloyd Jones spent much of his time among the Durham miners; yet the miners of one of the divisions of that county rejected his advances when he offered them his services as a candidate for Parliament. I don't think he ever recovered from the disappointment he then suffered,

for he died soon afterwards. Edward Truelove, who lived to the age of ninety, had two great heroes—Robert Owen and Thomas Paine. Other heroes he had too—Mazzini, Kossuth, Comte, Bradlaugh. Never a revolutionist appeared in any part of the world, provided he had for his object the elevation or liberation of the oppressed, without finding in Edward Truelove a warm sympathiser and helper. Neither did any cause of advancement, political or social, economic or intellectual, present itself for approval without finding in the same quarter an earnest and enthusiastic adherent. I cannot call to mind a popular movement of his time in which Mr. Truelove did not bear a hand. But, as I have said, Owen and Paine were his leading lights. Relics of both were among his most cherished possessions. It was on Paine's own writing-table that Moncure Conway wrote in Truelove's house at Hornsey the opening sentences of his biography of the great needleman. A man of absolute sincerity, pure as a girl and unselfish as a saint, Edward Truelove was as defiant as Danton when the occasion needed. And he needed all his fortitude and endurance when, for publishing a philanthropic pamphlet by Robert Dale Owen, son of the old Socialist, he had, at the age of seventy and over, to submit for months to the treatment of the

lowest criminal. George Jacob Holyoake, long connected with Truelove in many enterprises for the welfare and improvement of mankind, published in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, and subsequently in two stately volumes, his reminiscences of an agitator's life. Now considerably over eighty years of age, though he was never at any time a strong or a robust man, he can look back at many triumphs which he had a share in achieving.

Enthusiasts are sometimes the salt of the earth. One I knew was William Maccall, the apostle of Individualism. A big and brawny Scot, he never lost, nor cared to lose, the traces of his nationality: for his dialect was broad as his shoulders, and his speech as picturesque as the highlands of his native country. Henry George, the author of "Progress and Poverty," was an enthusiast of a different quality. When he came to Newcastle to propagate his ideas, he was confident of his ability to revolutionise society; nor did this confidence desert him when he returned to America. What he might have accomplished, if he had been elected Mayor of New York, as he had some prospect of being when he died suddenly in the midst of the contest, will now never be known. The movement he initiated died with him. George Crawshay was an enthusiast of a still different calibre—an enthusiast

for many things, for the Charter at one time, for the repeal of the Corn Laws at another, for the Poles, the Danes, and the Turks. A scholar and a philanthropist, he entertained Emerson when that great thinker visited Newcastle. Though he had command of great wealth throughout his early and middle life, the vicissitudes of industry swept it all away, and he died without a penny. But he never repined. During his last days, while confined to what proved to be his death bed, he wrote many notable things for the *Weekly Chronicle*, all marked by dainty taste and rare culture. A love-story of his—a record of reality, not a figment of imagination —was the most beautiful piece of the kind I ever read. It is sad to know that, when he left the town he and his firm had so long and so bountifully served, and left it penniless, he departed, as Joseph Cowen wrote, "without a sign of sympathy or a syllable of regret."

CHAPTER LXI

SCRAPINGS OF MEMORY

AFTER all has been said, there is always something more to be said. Let us gather up the fragments that remain.

Place to the ladies! This is only polite. But one must expect to be called a brute if one speaks one's mind on some of their manners and fashions. Time was when ladies, taking to heart the admonitions which the old parsons gave to the poor, were "content with the condition of life in which God had placed them." But this was before the advent of the "new woman"—before the advent of the "girl of the period" even. Everybody must lament the decay of that old-fashioned courtesy which lent so great a charm to social and public intercourse. But ladies themselves are perhaps not altogether blameless for the change. Some of them, as we know, show such entire contempt for the comfort of others—as in theatres, for instance, when they refuse to remove their obstructive hats—that they

arouse a not unnatural indignation. Moreover, the "new woman" has set up claims which must in the end prove fatal to all the ancient privileges the sex enjoyed. If women want to stand on the same footing as men, they must of course be prepared to submit to the same buffetings. Besides, it sometimes happens that ladies are deficient in manners themselves, especially when travelling in public vehicles. A lady enters a tramcar, and a gentleman resigns his seat to her. "I beg your pardon?" says the gentleman. "I did not speak," says the lady. "Oh," returns the gentleman, "I thought you said 'Thank you'!" A rebuke of this sort does not often need to be administered. But it ought not to be needed at all. It is only when ladies show consideration for the comfort of others that they can expect the deference and attention that were almost invariably extended to them in my young days.

Fashions are continually changing. The man of seventy who endeavours to recall their peculiarities, or even the order of their succession, will soon find himself in a difficulty. But there is one fashion that nobody who lived in the early sixties is likely to forget. I mean the crinoline. That dreadful arrangement was responsible for hundreds of miserable deaths. Rarely a week passed while our

women were wearing it without a fatality due to its use being recorded. But neither danger nor inconvenienee—not even inevitable exposure in a high wind or a narrow passage—deterred our women from retaining the hateful structure for many years. When a lady in a crinoline wanted to sit down, she had to lift up the hinder hoops of which it was composed and sit on them. I once went with a party of ladies and gentlemen for a drive into the country, when the crinolines had all to be surreptitiously taken off and stuffed under the seat. It was a tiresome time for everybody then. Many a man, sitting near the door of an omnibus on a rainy day, had his shirt-front and even his face smeared by the dirty skirts of the ladies who entered the vehicle after him. We may know from this that the fashion was—well, anything but decent.[1]

The chignon flourished at the same time as the crinoline. If you take a look at Leech's drawings in *Punch* at the period, you will see how hideous

[1] *Àpropos* of the crinoline, which was a cage-like arrangement of wires and tapes, the following little story may be appreciated:—When the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone of the proposed new docks on the Black Middens at North Shields was performed by Sir Joseph Cowen, chairman of the Tyne Commissioners (the stone was laid in the sixties, but the docks were never made), the latter part of the proceedings, as I well remember, was marred by a drenching shower. Among the gentlemen who assisted at

both looked. Even the Pope denounced the chignon; for in the March of 1869 Pius the Ninth invited all "Christian mothers and daughters of Mary" to form a league against it. "The doing up of chignons and the arranging of tresses several times a day," his Holiness declared, "occupy the time which should be devoted to religious duties, pious works, and family affairs." The chignon, a huge excrescence fixed to the back of the head, was accompanied by pads—resembling polonies in shape and size—which were hung on each side of the face. These pads were of course concealed under the hair—except at night, when they were hung (like Kilkenny cats on a clothes line) over the back of a chair. It must be admitted that the chignon, encased in a chenile net, had its uses when Belinda happened to have a back fall on the ice. But no use that anybody ever knew could be claimed for the polonies.

The fashions just mentioned were dirty and dangerous. But they were followed by others that were perhaps even more reprehensible—trailing

the ceremony was Chevalier Brightman, the Austrian Consul, whose official uniform was a gorgeous affair—duck trousers, scarlet coat, cocked hat, white plumes, etc. Mr. Brightman got drenched like the rest of us. On his way home he called at a cottage in search of a change of raiment. But the only change the poor woman could offer him was a crinoline!

skirts, and the wearing of the carcases of birds as millinery decorations.

Trailing skirts were a fearful nuisance; for anybody who walked behind a lady on a dusty day in town was certain to get smothered. What condition the lady herself was in can only be imagined. Our women were all Dorothy Draggle-tails then. They swept up and carried home in their garments much of the nameless filth of the streets. Investigations made by an Italian doctor indicate that the microbes thus introduced into the household might easily have been fatal to an ailing child. The skirt had always to be dusted in dry weather, but in wet weather it had to be scraped. Yet women submitted to this foul fashion for several years.[1]

"Of all the forces that regulate human society," it has been said, "fashion is one of the most irresistible, the most irresponsible, and the least intelligent. Inscrutable in its origin, impalpable in its authority, it is independent alike of humanity, taste, and sense." And fashion for nearly thirty years has proved more than a match for humanity. The craze for wearing first the feathers and then the wings and bodies of birds was in full flood in

[1] Written in 1901. And now (1903) the foul fashion is rampant again.

the middle of the seventies. It was in 1876 that Professor Newton, protesting against the barbarous custom, wrote that "feathers on the outside of any biped but a bird naturally suggest the association of tar." But neither ridicule nor remonstrance has availed to stay the cruelty. Millions and millions of birds have been destroyed to gratify a vanity which does not differ in its essence or its outward show from that of a Red Indian. Some species, once numerous, have been practically extirpated, while rarer and more beautiful species will soon be known no more on earth. It is women—the so-called gentle sex—that have worked this awful havoc. If they cannot be shamed into tenderness, one could almost wish that they could be stoned into it.

Men have their fashions as well as women. The shape of the hat, for instance, is continually changing, as is the cut of the coat and the trousers. Middle-aged people will recollect when the latter articles were so fashioned as to make the wearer look like a peg-top. Even in the matter of tobacco-smoking there have been changes. The habit is now almost universal—boys and even children, owing to the introduction of cigarettes, having acquired it. Unfortunately, it has induced another habit—the disgusting habit of spitting always and everywhere.

But in my young days, smoking, though common, was by no means general. Perhaps the difficulty of getting a light before the invention of the lucifer match had something to do with the slender patronage of the weed. Working men smoked clay pipes, and carried their tobacco in brass boxes. The clay pipe is still in vogue, but the brass box is now a curiosity. Churchwardens were an evening luxury, and meerschaums appurtenances of richer folk. And now briarwood pipes and indiarubber pouches have taken the place of the older conveniences.

But of the habit itself, what shall one say? As a pretty old smoker—off and on I have smoked for more than fifty years—I have this to say, that smoking is merely a habit, pleasant enough when you have acquired it, but not indispensable to human happiness if you haven't. Much has been said about the slavery of the habit. It is fascinating rather than enslaving. I once abandoned it altogether, and only took to it again when I began to write for the press. Since then I have had no desire to discard the practice, and see no reason for discarding it. The experience of others may be different. There is, for example, the story of Max Müller and Alfred Tennyson. The talk turned on tobacco. The professor confessed that he had formerly been the slave of the pipe, but had asserted

his independence by entirely renouncing it. "Well," said the poet, "anybody could do the same." Forthwith out of the window went his whole stock of pipes. The next day he was complacent, the day after he was moody, the third day he was miserable. Tennyson was then seen in the garden collecting his precious gods, never to be discarded again till the day he "crossed the bar." Similar was the experience of a Newcastle friend—a town councillor now dead. One evening he made a compact with another devotee of the soothing weed that neither should smoke again without his friend's consent. Next morning, immediately after breakfast, both were hunting all over the town for each other!

Diseases and accidents are common to us all. I have had experience of both. Once an attempt to protect a poor woman from a pack of dastardly boys led to weeks in bed from a sprained ankle. The boys were pelting the old dame with stones. She was so deaf that she did not hear the stones rattling around her head. I made a pretence of chasing the assailants, turned suddenly round, wrenched my foot on the curbstone, and then—agony! Sick and faint and unable to walk, I crawled to a main street where I could hail a cab. While I was propped against a wall, waiting in awful pain for a cab to come along, the poor creature

whom I had perhaps saved from fatal injuries, totally unconscious of her danger or mine, passed on her way home. Inscrutable indeed are the ways of Providence. Of another accident, though I was the subject, some one else was the victim. It arose from a telegraphic blunder. Not being able to keep an appointment, I instructed one of my children to send a telegram. The message, as prepared, ran thus :—" Don't expect any one to-night ; father is in bed." As delivered, however, it ran thus :— " Don't expect any one to-night ; father is dead." When the telegram was received, the lady of the house went into hysterics, remained in a distressing condition for several hours, and did not recover from the shock for many days afterwards. " Whenever, in telegraphic or telephonic circles, curious mistakes are discussed," wrote the chief of the department in Newcastle, " this is one of the worst that can be recalled." As the false report somehow got abroad in the town, people seemed to feel, I thought, that I had no right to be seen in the streets after all they had heard. Blood-poisoning, the result of scamping work in a new house, was not only nearly fatal, but the parent of a whole crop of diseases. Sydney Smith once remarked : " I have gout, asthma, bronchitis, and seven other maladies, but am otherwise very well." James

Payn, the novelist, shortly before he died, wrote in a similar strain : " I have had a fine old time with many disorders. For extreme agony, there are few things to beat rheumatic fever. As regards intolerant discomfort, there is nothing to vie with eczema ; but for helpless, hopeless misery, with a struggle for life every five minutes—a night with bronchitis." Well, asthma is pretty bad too. Dr. Horace Dobell relates the case of a gentleman who, travelling from Leeds or Manchester to Bournemouth, had to spend the time of the journey on his knees at the bottom of the railway carriage, gasping for air. A lady of my acquaintance had to sleep in a chair for months on end because she could not breathe in bed. Another patient could not rest in any bedroom in his house, and had at last to fix his couch in a sort of coal-hole, among pots and pans and other kitchen utensils. Such are the dreadful peculiarities of asthma. When the disorder is complicated with bronchitis, as it often is, a new misery is added to life. The wheezing and whistling in the sufferer's throat, comparable sometimes to the droning of a foghorn, sometimes to the wail and yelp of a ship's syren, disturb the household, wake up the sufferer from a fitful sleep, and rob even death of its terrors. But for excruciating agony there is nothing equal to sciatica. It is curious, though, that every form of

painful disease seems preferable to every other form when you are free from all but one. When I am writhing from sciatica, I think I would prefer asthma ; and when I am gasping from asthma, I think I would prefer sciatica. But the happy discoveries of modern days have given relief from many intolerable ailments. The effects of morphia are wonderful. First the pain begins to subside ; then it disappears altogether ; and then ensues a feeling of perfect peace—not sleep, nor the desire for sleep, but absolute and ecstatic enchantment. Such was my experience at heavenly intervals when enduring for months the torments of sciatica.

Yet there are vile complaints, the fruit of the lowest vices, which the public opinion of the day will not allow the faculty to prevent. I attended a meeting which was called in the sixties to consider the extension of the Contagious Diseases Act. The chairman of the meeting was the Mayor of Newcastle, Mr. Henry Angus. Most of the principal practitioners of the town were present—Dr. Charlton, Dr. Embleton, Dr. Arnison, Dr. Brady, Dr. Gregson, Dr. Hardcastle, Dr. Philipson, Dr. Russell. So were some of the leaders of the religious world—Archdeacon Prest, the Rev. Clement Moody (Vicar of Newcastle), and the Rev. Dr. John Collingwood Bruce. Indeed, the movement, judging from the

people who took a prominent part in promoting it, seemed to be of a religious and philanthropic character. Nevertheless, it provoked one of the most unpleasant agitations of the century—almost as unpleasant as that which arose later from the publication of the "Maiden Tribute." The opposition which the proposal of the Newcastle philanthropists brought out had the effect in the end of stopping all legislation of the nature indicated.

CHAPTER LXII

MORE SCRAPINGS

NEWCASTLE, since the present scribbler knew it, has been the scene of many exciting public meetings in the Town Hall. One of the earliest he recollects was called to consider a subject on which there was great division of opinion. The meeting was divided too. Sir John Fife occupied the chair. The gallant knight, after vainly endeavouring to obtain a hearing for the speakers, stepped down from his seat, strutted across the platform, and exclaimed at the top of his voice, as if he had been dispersing his regiment of volunteers, "I dissolve you as a disorderly meeting."

During the agitation for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, a ticket meeting was called by the Church party. A great gun was there from Dublin —the Rev. Tresham Gregg. There had been other meetings in the neighbourhood, called in the same way, at which the resolutions adopted were represented to embody the opinions of the inhabitants.

As soon as the proceedings in the Town Hall had been opened, the late Dr. Rutherford ascended the platform, and demanded an assurance from the promoters that no attempt would be made to pass off that meeting as a meeting of the inhabitants of Newcastle. Immense hubbub and excitement followed. Dr. Rutherford, however, was encouraged to persist by a small but determined section of the audience. The result was that the meeting was dissolved. As the gathering dispersed, a reverend gentleman was seen on the stairs holding out a ticket to the crowd, and exclaiming in a voice broken with anger and emotion, "They have come here with a lie in their right hand to disturb the proceedings." From that time to this, ticket meetings have never been popular in Newcastle.

No meetings in the Town Hall have ever been so crammed or so enthusiastic as those which Mr. Cowen addressed when he was seeking the suffrages of the electors or giving an account of his stewardship. Once there was a fearful crush to hear him when it was announced that he was going to address his constituents. The hon. member was himself so crushed and injured that there was no address at all. The time was critical, and some of Mr. Cowen's good-natured friends suggested that the whole thing was a feint ; yet from the injuries he sustained he

never completely recovered. On that occasion or some other the seats in the body of the hall had been removed so as to give room for a larger gathering. The consequence was disastrous. The pressure from both ends of the floor was so terrible that the audience seemed to bulge up in the middle. Many people in the midst of it had to be rescued in a fainting and exhausted condition by the occupants of the side elevations. I have witnessed many exhilarating scenes, but never any that equalled the delirium Mr. Cowen produced by a magnificent peroration about Arnold of Winkelreid and the gallant Greeks who leapt from Suli's rock.

During the short time he was member for Newcastle, Mr. Ashton Dilke had some exasperating experiences. One was when he called his first meeting after he had been elected. Infuriated Irishmen came from all parts of Tyneside, prevented the hon. member from speaking, and eventually stormed and captured the platform. It was not a meeting—it was a pandemonium. Irishmen on a later occasion were just as much infuriated against Michael Davitt. For some reason or other, Mr. Davitt had incurred the displeasure of the Fenians, and the Fenians had planned an organized attack upon their fellow-countryman and his friends. When the platform was invaded by a hostile and threatening

mob, Mr. Davitt drew a revolver from his pocket to defend himself. Fortunately, he had no occasion to use it: else the audience in the Town Hall, as an Irish Chief Constable of Newcastle said of another meeting that was broken up in the same place, might have been "floating in blood."

Besides disorderly meetings, party politics sometimes produce ludicrous things—party poetry, for instance. It is sad rubbish generally—a shade worse, perhaps, than the common run of comic songs of the day. When Mr. Surr William Duncan was Conservative candidate for the Wisbech Division of Cambridgeshire in 1892, the Hon. Mrs. Brand was said to have sung with great success at Liberal gatherings a song which contained the following couplet:—

> We have kept Surr William Duncan out,
> And shoved the Tories up the spout.

Conservative poets have been equal to the occasion also. Here are some sample lines from a ditty that was chanted with much amusement at a banquet in Edinburgh:—

> The G.O.M. will rise,
> By and by,
> To a mansion in the sky,
> By and by,
> Unless—oh! tale of woe!—
> He unfortunately go
> To the regions down below,
> By and by.

But worse is in store for the country if the party spirit should be allowed to ride rough-shod over it. The formation of a society of political agents is bringing us nearer and nearer to that system of "machine politics" which has produced so much corruption in the United States. As matters have looked in recent years, it seems likely that we shall not be long before there is a Tammany Hall in England—an institution which will make the ballot a fraud and popular government a scandal. One of the casuistic questions which election agents, who would appear to be qualifying themselves for Jesuit priests, have been asked to answer is this:—"What form of words would you advise for the use of a candidate anxious to pledge himself to the Temperance party without losing the support of the liquor interest?" If this be a specimen of the examination which professional politicians are expected to go through, we may bid farewell to what honesty and sincerity yet pertains to our political life. Nobody knows better than Mr. Bryce, whose great work on the "American Commonwealth" is a standard and a warning, the rascality and rottenness which the "spoils system" has introduced into the body politic of the United States. Yet, when he was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1893, he actually followed, in respect to the appointment of

magistrates, very nearly the same policy as that which has had demoralizing results on the other side of the Atlantic.

But politics afford a pleasant occupation to people who are socially inclined. The House of Commons has been described as the best club in London. I became for the time being a convert to that opinion when I once spent a night in it. We were the guests of the late John Candlish, then one of the members for Sunderland. Mr. Candlish showed us everything and everywhere—the legislative chamber, the library, the dining-room, the smoke-room. We practically sat in the House itself, though the business in hand was neither important nor very interesting. I recollect recognising many of the members from the struts and attitudes I had seen caricatured in the cartoons of *Vanity Fair*. But the strangest thing I saw there was an Irish member who was born without arms or legs. This was Mr. Kavanagh. We saw him in the smoke-room. Nothing particular was noticeable about him as he sat smoking and drinking and chatting with his friends; for he had been fitted with a contrivance which enabled him to hold his cigar and lift his glass. But the division bell rang. Then all was commotion. And the last we saw of Mr. Kavanagh was a figure with a dark skirt hurriedly disappearing on the back

of another member. The agility of the hon. gentleman in mounting his friend's shoulders was less astonishing than the fact we were told that he was in the habit of riding to hounds. That night in the House of Commons was an agreeable finish to a short holiday. One would perhaps think less highly of the performance, however, if one had to sit it out every night, and sometimes all night, for six months of the year.

Legislators who have every facility for getting drunk themselves—facilities that are not always neglected, for even Mr. Disraeli, according to Mr. Gladstone, had his "midnight manner"—can hardly be expected to put too tight a rein on other people. So temperance legislation, at all events until lately, made slow progress. Not that any legislation will do much to correct a habit that has long been reckoned one of the worst foibles of the English race. Dr. Johnson told Boswell that he remembered the time "when all decent people in Leicester got drunk every night, and were not the worse thought of." Decent people, or people who thought themselves decent, got drunk long after Johnson's time. A circumstance will illustrate the point. The drinking glasses we now call tumblers seem to owe their name to a new fashion that was introduced into this country at the close of the eighteenth century. They

were then called "tumbling glasses," for the reason that they were so made (somewhat after the shape of soda-water bottles) that they tumbled over unless held in the hand. Indeed, the object of these "tumbling glasses" was apparently to make the persons who used them drink more than they probably would have done otherwise. A correspondent of *Notes and Queries*, writing on this subject, quoted from an old diary kept by a great-uncle of his in the year 1803, in which occurred the following entry: —"Had a few friends to dine; tried my new 'tumbling glasses'; very successful—all got drunk early." But people in the "hupper suckles" got drunk early at the end as well as the beginning of the century—early in the day even. There was a fashionable wedding in Northumberland in 1896. Two days before the marriage a reporter was sent out to glean particulars at the ancestral mansion of the bride. The bride's father was found drunk at noon. "Can you tell me," he was asked by the reporter, "anything about the bridegroom?" "Bridegroom?" came the dazed reply: "well, they call him Archie, but d——d if I know what else they call him!"

The origin of other names besides that of "tumbler" is apt to get obscure unless fixed before it is too late. Take as an example the name Jingo, meaning

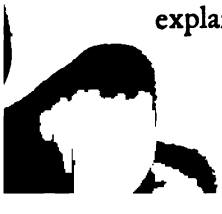
a sort of national swashbuckler. According to the "National Dictionary of Biography," the late Professor Minto, a member of the staff of the *Daily News*, claimed that he was the first to give the word "the currency of respectable print." But let the facts be fairly stated. During the excitement occasioned by the Russo-Turkish war, a music-hall performer named MacDermott obtained a great amount of kudos by singing a war-like song, the chorus of which ran something like this :—

> We don't want to fight;
> But, by Jingo, if we do,
> We've got the men, we've got the ships,
> And we've got the money too.

The song, in spite of its absurdity, took hold of the public mind, so that the refrain was heard and chanted everywhere. It came to pass that Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Auberon Herbert called a peace meeting in Hyde Park on Sunday, May 10th, 1878. The park, however, was invaded by a boisterous crowd, who roared the music-hall song, marched to the Turkish Embassy, and kept things lively for the rest of the day. Thereupon my old friend George Jacob Holyoake wrote to the *Daily News* suggesting that the war party should take the name of the patron saint of the music-halls, St. Jingo, and so he headed his letter, "The Jingoes in the Park."

The suggestion was adopted at once; advocates of a war policy became known as Jingoes; and the designation has since been appropriated by many foreign countries. This statement of the origin of the name is not invalidated by the fact that Sir George Otto Trevelyan (then Mr. Trevelyan, member for the Border Burghs) quoted the music-hall song in a speech at Selkirk in the January previous. The song was one thing; the proposal that the war party should be baptised Jingoes another thing.

There is no obscurity about the origin of Primrose Day and of the political organization called the Primrose League. The anniversary and the association were so christened because the primrose was supposed to be the favourite flower of Lord Beaconsfield, the Mr. Disraeli of an earlier period. But the assumption about the flower is alleged to have been due to a mistake. James Payn explained the matter. When Lord Beaconsfield died, Queen Victoria sent a huge wreath of primroses, bearing the inscription, "His favourite flower." The fashionable world at once jumped to the conclusion that the Queen meant the deceased statesman, whereas Payn declares that "his" in the royal mind always signified something belonging to the Prince Consort. The explanation is plausible. Throughout Disraeli's novels



it appears there is only one mention of primroses, and that is in "Lothair," where Lord St. Jerome remarks that "they make excellent salad." Payn was of opinion that nothing could have been conceived more out of character for Lord Beaconsfield than a preference for a simple flower. The peacock was his favourite bird. Reasoning from analogy, one would therefore suppose that the peony or the sunflower would have been more in harmony with his gaudy taste.

The weaknesses and follies of our people notwithstanding, we are all proud of our native land. It was Robertson of Brighton who said or wrote: —"Blessings on thee, my dear old blundering country: she never long mistakes an actor for a hero or a hero for an actor." Two sailors were talking about their respective countries. "If I were not a Frenchman," said one, "I would like to be an Englishman." "If I were not an Englishman," said the other, "I would like to be an Englishman." And so say all of us! England is not always right; but she is oftener right than any other country in the world. It is true that she occasionally conquers new territories; but the territories that are thus conquered, thanks to an enlightened policy that has seldom varied, are not exploited simply and solely for her own advantage. She does not

shut up her possessions, as France has shut up Madagascar or as Russia would shut up China. There is little need, therefore, for any Englishman to raise the cry of some foolish Americans—"Our country, right or wrong." The influence and prospects of the British race can only be ruined by the vices and stupidities of the British race itself. The pursuit of narrow and sordid interests in preference to broad and patriotic interests—solicitude for the advantage of a class instead of the welfare of the nation at large—would sooner or later be fatal to us all. So also would be the sacrifice of the general prosperity to the gross indulgences of the individual. Thrift and industry, probity and sobriety, will ensure the salvation of any race on earth. They will prove the salvation of ours. For the rest, there is the idea of obligation. Thomas Drummond laid down the doctrine that property has its duties as well as its rights. When we have learnt the still better lesson of Joseph Mazzini—that the duties of man are as divinely ordained as the rights of man—we may march on our way, defiant and rejoicing.

FINIS.

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